CPA gets 3 new loading bridges. PAGE 2
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Saipan Tribune

THE CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER

Volume XXX, Issue No. 258

www.saipantribune.com | WEDNESDAY DECEMBER 30, 2020 | www.facebook.com/saipantribune

1-man protest near IPR worksite

Daniel Jake Kaipat, 28, a general laborer of AM Group, stages a lone protest yesterday over alleged non-payment of wages owed by Imperial Pacific International (CNMI) LLC.
BEA CABRERA

» Worker protests alleged non-payment, wage delays

FERDIE DE LA TORRE
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REPORTER

A worker of a contractor of Imperial Pacific International (CNMI) LLC's Imperial Pacific Resort project in Garapan staged a one-man protest yesterday over alleged non-payment of wages that he

See 1-MAN on Page 4

RELATED NEWS

➤ 'Torres completely silent about humanitarian crisis of IPI workers.' PAGE 3

AT A GLANCE

As of 6pm, Dec. 29, 2020

GUAM	OLD	NEW	TOTAL
Positive	7,270	23	7,293
Recovered	6,743	211	6,954
Active	195	23	218
Deaths	121	0	121
Cumulative Number of Persons Tested			101,068

SAIPAN	OLD	NEW	TOTAL
Positive	122	0	122
Traced via Travel Screening	96	0	96
Traced via Community Screening	26	0	26
Deaths	2	0	2
Cumulative Number of Persons Tested			22,633*
Days since last community transmission			134

*Total count includes the number of persons tested on Saipan, Tinian, and Rota. With guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, CHCC has opted not to report active and recovered cases.

Source: Joint Information Center - Guam, Commonwealth Healthcare Corp.

COMMUNITY VULNERABILITY

LEGEND:
- **Red:** Least safe
- **Orange**
- **Yellow**
- **Blue**
- **Green:** Safest

Source: Office of the Governor

COVID-19 vaccinations expanded

By JUSTINE NAUTA
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REPORTER

The Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. started the process yesterday for the next phase of COVID-19 vaccinations, with the opening of the registration for those who fall under Phase 1B criteria, which includes most CNMI government employees.

That prompted a rush of people attempting to register with CHCC for the vac-

See COVID-19 on Page 4

CWs now eligible for PUA

By KIMBERLY A. BAUTISTA
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REPORTER

Foreign workers in the CNMI who fall under the CW-1 immigration category—called CNMI-Only Transitional Workers—can now apply for Pandemic Unemployment assistance with the CNMI Department of Labor, thanks to the recent signing into law of a second COVID-19 relief bill.

Labor Secretary Vicky Benavente said it is great news that CW workers will be eligible for Round 2 of the PUA

See PUA on Page 4

Woman says Suicide Cliff fatality is her missing husband

FERDIE DE LA TORRE
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REPORTER

A woman has asked the Superior Court to give her another option in identifying the body that was found in a car that plunged off Suicide Cliff last Dec. 8, 2020, after the Department of Public Safety informed her that it will take a year to identify the body through

» Woman says DPS told them it takes 1 year to identify body using DNA testing

DNA testing.

Marilou B. Ortega, who is a permanent resident in the

Torres

CNMI, believes that the man who died in that fatal plunge was her husband, Jessie Ruiz Ortega, with whom she has two children.

Marilou and Jessie Ortega are owners of Ortega Corp.,

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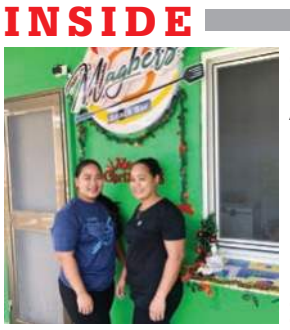
INSIDE



BUSINESS
A Sabalu Market legend relocates to Kada Dia and renamed itself Magbers Snack Bar.

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Many Pacific governments have begun community initiatives to alleviate food shortages.

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LIFE & STYLE
Ryan Seacrest says he's been juggling more than usual during despite the COVID-19 pandemic.

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Local

CPA gets 3 new loading bridges

By JUSTINE NAUTA
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REPORTER

The Commonwealth Ports Authority installed three new loading bridges last Dec. 28, just in time for the estimated start of the travel bubble with South Korea on Jan. 8.

The loading bridge, which is commonly called passenger boarding bridge, is an enclosed, elevated passageway that extends from an airport terminal gate to an airplane. The ones responsible for installing the bridges are CPA's contractor, AIC Marianas Inc., and a subcontractor.

CPA chair Kimberlyn King-Hinds stated that the loading bridges have been here for a couple of months and the installation was delayed due to COVID-19's impact on travel and scheduling.

The CNMI is expected to receive three more loading bridges, for a total of six new equipment. The first loading bridges are funded by the Federal Aviation Administration, while the last three are funded by COA's insurance proceeds.

According to King-Hinds, CPA has insurance coverage for natural disasters. In this case, CPA's insurance proceeds helped cover the repair or replacements of the damage caused by Super Typhoon Yutu last October 2018.

The last three to be installed is still under discussion and the project will go out for bid in late January or February.

Most of CPA's projects that they have been pushing to expedite are either insurance proceeds-funded or federally funded.

According to *Saipan Tribune* archives, CPA engaged the contract for the loading bridges project last January 2019 with the construction firm, AIC Marianas. The project was designed in 2017, was advertised in 2018, and was scheduled for the award prior to Super Typhoon Yutu. Because of the typhoon, though, the contract was not executed until January 2019.

The project was to be performed in two phases due to the intricacies of working on the aircraft parking apron and to ensure that flight operations are not hampered. The first phase of the project consisted of the contractor mobilizing, staging, and fabricating the three bridges, which were manufactured by JBT in Utah.

The second phase of the project consisted of the demolition of the three originally contracted bridges. However, due to Super Typhoon Yutu and safety concerns stemming from the damaged bridges, CPA submitted a change order to the FAA to allow the contractor to demolish all six bridges.

After months of delays due to COVID-19, the Commonwealth Ports Authority's contractor, AIC Marianas Inc., finally installs three new loading bridges at the Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport last Dec. 28, just in time for the estimated date of arrivals from South Korea on Jan. 8.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Marino completes graduate studies as BRMC scholar

The Micronesia Conservation Trust and partners of the Micronesia Challenge congratulate Lincy Lee Marino for completing her graduate program as a recipient of the Bill Raynor Micronesia Challenge Scholarship.

Marino

Marino, the sixth graduate of the BRMC, from Palau, was one among the three students awarded the scholarship in 2019. In the fall of 2020, she completed her master's degree in Sustainable Management from the University of Wisconsin-Green Bay. Over the course of her academic year, she successfully balanced her full-time job as a researcher at the Palau International Coral Reef Center with being a full-time graduate student. She also serves as Palau's core member to the Micronesia Challenge Socioeconomic measure's group.

After graduating, Marino will continue to carry her roles as a researcher at PICRC and as a core member of the Micronesia Challenge SEM team. She is passionate about ensuring that Palau does not endanger their pristine environment in exchange for better economic standing and she sees a greater need to integrate sustainable management practices to preserve the environment along with Palau's cultures and traditions.

The scholarship program was inspired by William "Bill" Charles Raynor (Feb. 22, 1957-Sept. 1, 2015), one of Micronesia's lead conservation pioneers. ***(PR)***

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‘Torres completely silent about humanitarian crisis of IPI workers’

FERDIE DE LA TORRE
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REPORTER

House minority leader Rep. Tina Sablan (D-Saipan) blasted Gov. Ralph DLG. Torres yesterday for keeping completely silent about the situation of foreign workers of Imperial Pacific International (CNMI) LLC, which she says has turned into a “humanitarian crisis.”

Speaking at a House of Representatives’ session, Sablan suggested summoning IPI to the Legislature and engaging with Torres. She said the governor is not helpless in this situation as he has the power to act.

“I am frankly deeply saddened and ashamed. Honestly, I’m ashamed at how these people are being treated,” she said.

Sablan said she has been visiting with and communicating with current and former employees of IPI, who have been facing “truly dire” circumstances. “Some of us may already be familiar with those circumstances but, most recently, it has looked like six missed pay periods, many months of payroll delays, [and] just the chronic problems of getting paid on time,” she said.

Sablan said there is no word yet on the repatriation ticket for dozens of workers who are stuck here who just want to get paid and go home.

She said that power and water were cut once again last week to another dormitory or IPI housing—this time at a Turkish camp in Chalan Laulau. Sablan said that when she visited the workers over the weekend, there was still no power and water.

House minority leader Rep. Tina Sablan talks about the situation of workers of Imperial Pacific International (CNMI) LLC during a session yesterday afternoon. According to her, the situation is turning into a humanitarian crisis. Also in the photo, from left, are Reps. Janet Maratita (R-Saipan), Luis John Castro (Ind-Saipan), and Ralph N. Yumul (R-Saipan).

FERDIE DE LA TORRE

She said this happened despite IPI promising the Commonwealth Casino Commission at their meeting last Tuesday that the workers would be relocated.

The lawmaker said the bathrooms were disgusting, the trash was piling up outside, and the bushes were overgrown. She said some of the workers were begging their family members to send them money.

“They came here to work to send money to their families, and now their families are having to scrape together money just so they can live here,” she said.

Sablan said the workers had just run out of drinking water, which is basic for human life.

“Thanks to some generous donors, we were able to get some relief supplies for these workers,” she said.

The lawmaker said she was told that power was finally restored for the Turkish dorms last Monday night, but now the Taiwanese and Mongolian workers have lost their utilities.

“Colleagues, these are not safe, decent, or habitable conditions for any human being. And we cannot ignore this. We cannot ignore the humanitarian crisis that is happening where there is so much suffering,” she said.

Sablan said these workers have no other way of earning an income as they have no family in the CNMI to rely on. “Many of them don’t even speak English and they just want to go home. The governor has been completely silent about this crisis happening right now,” she said.

Sablan said IPI is in so much trouble—financial, legal, and other things. “Everybody is suing them. They’re not paying anybody, workers, vendors, the government. But why do they continue to have this license?” she asked.

Sablan said what is needed at this point is drastic executive action. “In my opinion, the governor is an enforcer. He holds enforcement authority,” she said.

COMMUNITY BRIEFS

Surviving COVID-19: A year in review on PBS Guam

MANGILAO, Guam—PBS Guam presents “Surviving COVID-19” a television special highlighting those who played a critical role in assisting our island in the survival of the COVID-19 pandemic here in Guam.

The year in review special program will premiere on PBS Guam, KGTF Channel 12 and on our YouTube page @PBSGuam today, Dec. 30, 2020, at 8pm with a rebroadcast on Saturday, Jan. 2, 2020, also at 8pm.

“As we put the struggles of 2020 behind us, we are hopeful and offer a prayer of solidarity from our island’s most recognizable spiritual leaders of the Evangelical, Methodist, Seventh-Day Adventist, Episcopal, Lutheran, and Catholic followers. Let us all come together in unity to remember our brothers and sisters that we have lost to COVID-19, the loved ones they left behind, and those who continue to struggle. The COVID-19 pandemic continues to disrupt our way of life but Guamanians will continue to stay cautious of keeping themselves, family, friends, colleagues, and neighbors safe,” said PBS Guam in a statement yesterday. ***(PR)***

CHaroru commission meeting set

The *Kumisión i Fino’ CHamoru yan i Fina’nå’guen i Historia yan i Lina’la’ i Taotao Tåno’* (Commission on CHamoru Language and the Teaching of the History and Culture of the Indigenous People of Guam) will hold its first January monthly Virtual meeting on Jan. 7, 2021, Thursday, from 12:30pm to 3:30pm on a Zoom link. Call Kumisión secretary Roland Blas for Zoom link information, special accommodations, and agenda at 480-4047 or email rolandblas1973@gmail.com. ***(PR)***

NORTHERN MARIANAS HOUSING CORPORATION
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Tels: (670) 233-9447 / 233-9448 / 233-9449 / 233-9450 I Fax: (670) 233-9452

Ralph DLG. Torres
Governor

Arnold I. Palacios
Lt. Governor

Notice of Program Availability
Community Development Block Grant Disaster Recovery
(CDBG-DR) – Housing Programs

The Northern Marianas Housing Corporation (NMHC) wishes to announce the availability of the CDBG-DR Housing Programs. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) has allocated the CNMI a total of $243,946,000 to aid in the recovery of Typhoon Mangkhut and Super Typhoon Yutu. $113,362,000 of the total amount is allocated to Housing Programs.

Eligibility Criteria
- Must be a U.S. Citizen, a U.S. National, or a qualified alien;
- Must be a resident of the CNMI for at least three (3) years;
- Gross annual household income, according to size of household, must not exceed 120% of median income.
- Must provide proof of ownership such as fee simple title or leasehold interest of the property and not located in a floodplain.

Information on the CDBG-DR Housing Programs
- Elderly and/or disabled applicants who were displaced by the storms are prioritized. However, eligible applicants that are mortgage ready will be prioritized on a first come, first serve basis over the elderly and/or disabled applicants who are not mortgage ready.
- Type of Financial Assistance:
  o Deferred Loans
  o Non-Interest (zero-interest) Bearing Loans
- **Rehabilitation and Reconstruction Program** loan amount: $10,000 up to the maximum HOME per-unit subsidy limits that apply to the CNMI as determined by HUD.
- **Homebuyer Program** loan amount: $1,000 to $250,000.

Application Steps
- Starting December 18, 2020, Pre-qualification applications and checklist are available for pick up at the CDBG-DR Office and the NMHC Offices on Saipan, Tinian, and Rota or print an application made available on the NMHC and CDBG-DR websites at www.nmhcgov.net and www.cnmi-cdbgdr.com.
- Completed pre-qualification applications and interviews will be conducted starting January 4, 2021 at the NMHC Main Office in Garapan, Saipan, NMHC Tinian Field Office (NMC Campus), and the Sinapalo Youth Center on Rota, Monday to Friday from 8:00 AM to 3:00 PM except Holidays.
- Once the pre-application is completed and submitted, the case workers will assess the pre-qualification application and determine whether the applicant is eligible for the programs(s). If the applicant is eligible, the case worker will schedule an appointment with the applicant. If an applicant is deemed ineligible, a notification will be sent to the applicant.
- The case worker will inform the eligible applicant of the next steps once the application process has been completed.

Should you have any questions or need special accommodations, please contact the CDBG-DR office at 233-9447.

“NMHC is an equal employment and fair housing public agency”

Tinian Field Office
Tel: (670)433-9213
Fax: (670)433-3690

CDBG-DR Office
Tel: (670)233-9447/9448/9449

Rota Field Office
Tel: (670)532-9410
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INSTALLMENT AVAILABLE

Emergency kits donated to PBUCE

In collaboration with Hawaii's Pacific Basin University Centers for Excellence and the CNMI Homeland Security & Emergency Management's Community Emergency Response Team program, PBUCE received last Friday a donation of 20 emergency kits for the Northern Marianas College's University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities' Feeling Safe Being Safe project.

UCEDD program manager Arlene Yamagata and PBUCE's Floyd Masga were on hand to receive the donations from CERT program manager Patrick Cepeda and CERT staffer Steve Aguon last Dec. 18, 2020.

The FSBS training and tools are aimed at activating participants to take charge of their own safety planning. FSBS is about preparing and practicing for an emergency to help you feel safer every day. Not knowing what to do can lead to panic and confusion during an emergency or disaster, and maybe even contribute to an unsafe situation.

The CERT Program, PBUCE, and NMC UCEDD will be discussing further plans to train people with disabilities and their family members early next year to take a more active role in emergency management planning, and to prepare themselves and others for disasters.

On behalf of the PBUCE and its partners, we thank the CERT program staff for continuously taking an active role in helping the people of the CNMI. ***(PR)***

COVID-19

From Page 1

cination yesterday and caused the CNMI's vaccination portal—vaccinatecnmi.com—to crash. The online portal was so overwhelmed that it was inaccessible for many hours and anyone attempting to register on the site were told that the site was "undergoing maintenance." The site became accessible by 5:34pm.

CHCC also announced yesterday that it will start preparing to roll out the Moderna vaccines to Rota and Tinian and residents of both islands are expected to start getting vaccinated in early to mid-January. It was earlier reported that the shipment of 400 doses of Moderna vaccines that arrived last Dec. 26 will be going to Rota, Tinian, and those on Saipan who are homebound.

Under the expanded vaccination schedule, Phase 1B includes CNMI government employees, including COVID-19 contract tracers, CNMI elected officials and judges, federal employees, judges, education workers, telecommunication employees, and faith-based officials. Those who meet the criteria will be given a schedule that will be posted on CHCC's Facebook page to ensure a space is still available for those in Phase 1A.

Those who qualify under Phase 1A—health care workers, front-line personnel, and the *man'amko*—will still be able to get the vaccine, and that the new registration is just an expansion to get the island vaccinated, Muña said.

She added those with underlying health conditions who aren't over 60 years of age will have to wait until the CNMI receives the next set of COVID-19 vaccines. The next shipment will accommodate over 10,000 people. There is no information yet on when the next shipment will arrive.

Speaking at a special radio briefing last Dec. 24, Muña stated that the turnout since last Dec. 19, when the CNMI started vaccinations, has exceeded expectations. As of Dec. 28, over 1,700 front-liners and *man'amko* in the CNMI has been vaccinated with the Pfizer/BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine.

Muña herself got vaccinated last Dec. 19 and, while others haven't felt anything after getting the shot, her arm became a little tight and she got a slight headache in the middle of the night. Health experts have stated that these are just the body's normal reaction to the vaccine and the symptoms are a sign that it is working.

She urged people to be proactive about taking the shots and should register if they fall within the groups that are in line for the vaccines. "We don't need to wait for the health care workers. The health care workers are busy, and they're contemplating of when exactly they're going to take it, [so] we are encouraging the *man'amko* and also those with underlying health conditions to please come and so that we can make sure that we protect you," said Muña.

PUA

From Page 1

program because it was heartbreaking when they weren't eligible the first time.

"Now we can finally help everyone who was affected by the pandemic. It's an amazing thing. We are very fortunate that this was included this time around. It was heartbreaking to disqualify CWs when they've spent so many years working here and contributing to the economy, yet they were not eligible. Now, it's a reason to be grateful that we can include them," she said.

Benavente said, though, that there are still a few details that CNMI DOL needs verified by the U.S Department of Labor. As intended under the program, the PUA benefit is not a blanket gift to everyone and only applies to those whose jobs were negatively affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, whether they were terminated, furloughed, or had their work hours cut.

"It's good news that they're eligible but there are some things that still need to be verified by the USDOL and I'm sure they will still have to discuss this with their legal team. But for me it's still great news," Benavente said. "It's going to help a lot of people who aren't working. It's going to help a lot of families struggling. We're very fortunate that President [Donald] Trump signed the bill into law. We will open when we are ready."

Some of the things that need verification include from what date CWs can start filing for, what documents will be needed, and whether CWs with expired visas or have been terminated will qualify for benefits.

Once CNMI DOL receives the guidelines from USDOL and is granted funding, the department will immediately start the process of reopening the online portal where people can apply for PUA, Benavente said.

"As soon as I find out from USDOL about the funding, we will make an announcement for reopening the portal. Although the bill has been signed, still we have to request for the grant from USDOL and that's what we're processing now," she said.

Benavente said it is important that the CNMI has the funding ready once they open so that applicants don't experience the same long wait times. "We want to make sure that the funding is available because we don't want people to get upset again when they see a pay date and we tell them that they have to wait. Even though the portal says you are eligible, we still need to make sure we have the funding from USDOL," she said.

At the moment, DOL has no set date of reopening the portal.

The package that Trump signed into law revives a weekly pandemic jobless benefit boost of $300 as well as the Paycheck Protection Program of grants to businesses to keep workers on payrolls. It also extends eviction protections and adds a new rental assistance fund.

In addition, the bill also allocates funding for $600 stimulus checks.

1-MAN

From Page 1

estimates at about $2,000.

Daniel Jake Kaipat, 28, a general laborer of AM Group, stood on a spot on Beach Road near Duty Free Shoppers and Imperial Pacific Resort and help up a banner that read "STILL HOPING TO GET PAID MR. SUE."

It's not clear whether Kaipat is referring to Su Hongtao, who is reportedly an adviser to the IPI board and an investor in another project on Saipan.

As of press time yesterday, *Saipan Tribune* was still awaiting comments from IPI.

Kaipat, who said he is a U.S. Army veteran, claimed that Sue is in charge of paying IPI's contractor, AM Group, where he has worked since December 2019. Kaipat said Sue, however, has not paid for many of them.

"So half of us are actually working, and the other half are not. So I'm actually standing my ground for the people that are not working, which is including myself," he said.

Kaipat said they have always experienced delayed paychecks and some check even bounced since the beginning of the furloughs last February or March.

"So it's very difficult and stressful for a lot of us," he said, adding that IPI does not have the financial stability to give them the money.

Kaipat said he worked last Saturday and then was allowed to work only four hours on each day last Sunday and Monday. He said he reported for work yesterday but was told to go home because Sue is not paying.

"He's trying to shy away from it," Kaipat said.

He said six to nine workers, including himself, are affected, while the others "are blessed" because they have jobs.

Kaipat claims to being electrocuted at the site last June but managed to continue working.

DPL ready for counter-offer to Hyatt

FERDIE DE LA TORRE
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REPORTER

The Department of Public Lands will be making a counter-offer to the Hyatt Regency Saipan—possibly by next week—on the hotel's proposal on its expiring land lease.

DPL Real Estate Division director Bonnie Royal disclosed in an interview yesterday that they are preparing a letter to Hyatt about the hotel's overall proposal that they hope to give it next week. Royal said the letter will indicate whether DPL is going to accept or deny the Hyatt proposal, but also make a counter-offer.

"This is where the process of negotiation starts because they have completed [the requirements]," she said.

The director said they have accepted Hyatt's proposal as complete, which is a requirement in order to start the negotiations.

Royal said they received last Dec. 2 the remaining documents from Hyatt and that they were able to review them. The following day, Dec. 3, they met with Hyatt, in which they discussed the documents that were submitted.

The director said there is still a requirement that they want, but DPL Secretary Marianne Concepcion-Teregeyo accepted the proposal as complete. "So now we are reviewing the proposal and we are getting ready to respond to Hyatt," Royal said.

Deveney Dela Cruz, special assistant to DPL secretary, earlier stated that DPL received an official proposal packet from Hyatt's current lessee, Saipan Portopia Hotel Corp., last Oct 20, but the package was incomplete.

Last October, Gov. Ralph DLG Torres said he would like to see Hyatt get the extension.

Hyatt's 40-year public land lease will expire in December 2021.

The recent enactment of Public Law 20-84 increases the terms of public land leases of up to 40 years, plus an extension of 15 years, for a total of 55 years. It also authorizes certain public land leases to be amended and extend existing lease terms up to 55 years.

WOMAN

From Page 1

which owns real property and other businesses in the CNMI.

Robert Torres, representing Marilou Ortega as counsel, asked the court to grant her request to serve as administratrix of Jessie Ortega's estate.

Associate Judge Joseph N. Camacho will hear Marilou Ortega's request on Feb. 4, 2021.

Marilou Ortega said that prior to Jessie Ortega's disappearance, he was going through severe distress regarding a business matter and, in fact, had sought legal assistance from Torres prior to Dec. 8.

A Department of Public Safety report said that a vehicle drove off of Suicide Cliff last Dec. 8 at 4:30pm and that the vehicle was a black 2007 Toyota Tacoma pickup with license plate ACX-444.

Torres said that, according to DPS, the vehicle had a lone occupant who was killed and whose remains are pending identification.

Torres said that Jessie Ortega has been missing since Dec. 8 and his whereabouts remain unknown. Torres said that Marilou Ortega had her last contact with her husband on that day, Dec. 8, and he has not returned home nor has he had any contact with anyone since then. Torres said the Toyota pickup truck was owned and registered to Jessie Ortega.

Torres said that DPS is trying to coordinate identification of the remains found at Suicide Cliff either through DNA or dental records. The body remains at the morgue of the Commonwealth Health Center.

However, the lawyer said, DPS is saying that the process in requesting DNA verification may take approximately one year. Torres suggests alternate and expeditious options for verification of the remains as those of Jessie Ortega.

Torres said that because Jessie Ortega has been absent for a continuous period, during which has not been heard from and the person's absence is not satisfactorily explained after diligent search or inquiry, the circumstances amount to evidence of his death.

He said Jessie Ortega owned 90,000 shares of the family-owned Ortega Corp. and that Marilou Ortega owns 10,000 shares (10%). Torres said the corporation operates a small construction company, JMJ Construction, with two pending small renovation projects with Eliceo Cabrera and Shawnalei Ogumoro.

He said Ortega Corp. has a checking account with First Hawaiian Bank under Ortega Corp. JMJ Construction, and a checking account at the Bank of Hawaii.

The company employs seven workers, several of whom are CW-1 workers subject to renewal.

Ortega Corp. also has a business license for a fishing venture with two boats and a business, Tomas Fish Mobile, in Chalan Kanoa.

Torres said the company has receivables due approximately $65,000 from the Public School System for completed projects/contracts.

He said the company's liabilities are a $25,000 loan with the Small Business Administration that was taken last November, a $5,000 loan balance with Isla Financial from the purchase of a boat engine from Joeten Motors, and CNMI Gross Revenue Taxes due.

A longer version of this story is available at www. saipantribune.com

‘Unstable tower crane frame left unattended’

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REPORTER

A former safety consultant of Imperial Pacific International (CNMI) LLC claims that a tower crane frame at the Imperial Pacific Resort project in Garapan was seen over the weekend dangling and turning in the air and poses a safety hazard.

David Rillera Jr., president of DR Safety Consultant LLC, said the crane frame was left unattended for four days and was only removed Sunday.

Rillera, who showed *Saipan Tribune* a video he took of the crane frame last Saturday, said it’s a public safety concern. He pointed out that Occupational Safety and Health Administration policies and rules state that it’s a violation to leave something like that up in the air without any operator.

“No materials shall be left unattended while load is being rigged,” he said.

As of press time yesterday, IPI had yet to comment on the issue.

IPI chief executive officer Donald Browne earlier stated that Rillera is just upset and should seek legal assistance if he has a disagreement with IPI or other persons.

In an interview with Rillera over the weekend, he questioned why the Department of Public Works or the Commonwealth Casino Commission did not do anything about the unattended crane frame.

Following the CCC’s repeated demands for safety issues, IPI hired a company to remove one of four cranes at the construction site as it was broken.

At the CCC meeting last week, Rillera told the commissioners during the public comments portion that his company was still the safety management company when IPI breached their contract by hiring his employees to work for another company, so in that way IPI did not need to pay his company in resuming work.

He said he terminated his contract with IPI for the safety inspection and engineer of record services after the company failed to pay for its services, which begs the question: Who is now doing the SI and EOR services for IPI?

He said IPI does not have anyone from their construction team making calls for decisions other than a certain Mr. Su. He did not give Su’s full name.

Browne previously stated that Mr. Su is an adviser to the IPI board and an investor in another project on Saipan.

Saipan Tribune learned that the person’s full name is Su Hongtao.

Rillera claims that Su runs AM Group, which has allegedly pirated his employees who are being paid in cash.

Rillera earlier stated that IPI resumed construction work at its casino/hotel project last Nov. 30 with a new consultant that has no special inspectors.

He said his company has done much work in the last three years for IPI with no OSHA and DPW violations.

Last Nov. 25, DPW lifted its stop-work order against IPI after IPI complied with DPW’s Building Safety Code Division’s requirement.

IPI received the stop-work order from DPW last Oct. 27.

TOYS FOR TOTS
U.S. Marines with Marine Corps Base Camp Blaz pose for photos with the Associated Students of Northern Marianas College, Saipan Young Professionals, and local businesses during the annual Toys for Tots campaign on Saipan on Dec. 17, 2020. This year marks the 73rd year of the national Marine Corps Reserve Toys for Tots Campaign and the 7th year on Saipan. The mission of the Toys for Tots Program is to collect new, unwrapped toys and distribute those toys to less fortunate children at Christmas. The Toys for Tots campaign partners with local organizations and businesses to help bring the joy of Christmas and send a message of hope to Guam’s and CNMI’s disadvantaged children.
U.S. MARINE CORPS/URIAH PEREZ

Commonwealth Utilities Corporation
Office of the Executive Director

INVITATION FOR BIDS
CUC-IFB-21-005

A-2, A-5 AND A-6 SEWER LIFT STATION RENOVATION

The Office of the Executive Director, Commonwealth Utilities Corporation (CUC) is soliciting competitive sealed bids from qualified firms for the A-2, A-5 and A-6 Sewer Lift Station Renovation project in Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

The project consists of the renovation of the existing A-2, A-5 and A-6 sewer lift stations, including but not limited to the renovation of the existing generator buildings or the construction of a new generator building, the renovation or relocation of the wet wells with all new pipings, fittings, pumps, generators, and other equipment and appurtenances. The project also includes the installation of a temporary by-pass system and the relocation of existing utilities to accommodate construction activities. The work shall be done in accordance with the Project Plans and Specifications and without disruption to the daily operation of the sewer system. CUC requires the Project to be completed in ***365* calendar days** from date of award of contract.

The project is funded by a grant from the United States of Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA). The award of this project is contingent upon receipt of approval for project award from USEPA.

Prospective Bidders must pre-register with the CUC Procurement & Supply Division. The Bid Package may be obtained from the CUC Procurement and Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, Saipan, between 7:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, except on government observed holidays, upon completion of registration and presentation of a receipt evidencing a non-refundable payment to the CUC Treasury Section, by cash, check or credit card in the amount of $200.00 (non-refundable) for one IFB package set.

A Pre-Bid Conference followed by site visits will be held on December 16, 2020 at 10:00 AM (ChST) at the CUC Main Conference Room, 3rd Floor, Room No.17, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building.

One (1) original and Five (5) copies of the bid must be submitted in a sealed envelope marked **“CUC-IFB-21-005, A-2, A-5 and A-6 Sewer Lift Station Renovation”** to the CUC Procurement & Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, P.O. Box 501220, Saipan, MP 96950, **no later than 10:00 AM (ChST) January 6, 2021**, at which time they will be publicly opened and read aloud. Bids mailed via postal or courier service must be received on or before due date and time or post-marked before due date and time.

Bid shall be submitted on the provided Bid Forms. Bidders are required to complete all Bid Forms. Bidders may supplement this form as appropriate. Bids will be required to be submitted under a condition of irrevocability for a period of 60 days after submission. Late submissions and conditional bids will not be considered.

Bids shall be accompanied by a bid guarantee of not less than fifteen percent (15%) of the amount of the bid. The security deposit may be in cash, certified check, cashier’s check, or bid bond executed by a surety company holding a certificate of authority from the United States Secretary of Treasury as an acceptable surety or other surety acceptable to the Attorney General.

A *Payment Bond* of one hundred (100%) percent and a *Performance Bond* of one hundred (100%) percent of the total bid price will be required upon the execution of the contract by the successful bidders. The Payment and Performance bond must be executed by a surety company holding a certificate of authority from the United States Secretary of Treasury as an acceptable surety or other surety acceptable to the Attorney General.

All insurers’ questions, concerns and qualification shall be handled by the Department of Commerce Office of the Insurance Commissioner (OIC). The OIC is tasked with regulating and monitoring compliance to the CNMI’s Insurance Code (Title 4, Division 7). *Bidders are required to submit a clearance from the OIC certifying their insurer of choice is in compliance with the CNMI’s Insurance Code.*

Bidders are required to comply with all CNMI and applicable Federal Laws. This bid and the ensuing contract shall be executed pursuant to the CUC Procurement Regulations.

This Invitation for Bids does not commit CUC to the award of a contract or contracts, nor to pay any cost incurred in the preparation and submission of bids in anticipation of a contract. Bidders are advised that CUC assumes no responsibility in any act of omission on the part of the bidders due to lack of information or understanding of the bid requirements in the course of Contractor’s preparation of a bid under the contract.

Questions or requests for clarification will be entertained only from registered Proponents and must be submitted in writing **no later than 10:00 a.m. (ChST) on December 18, 2020** to Manny B. Sablan, CUC Purchasing Administrator via email address manny.sablan@cucgov.org with a copy to Nicolette Villagomez, CUC Water & Wastewater, Engineer nicolette.villagomez@cucgov.org and Christie L. Sablan, CUC P&S, Senior Administrative Technician christie.sablan@cucgov.org.

CUC reserves the right to reject any or all bids and waive any imperfection in the bid proposal in the best interest of the government. All bids shall become the property of CUC.

GARY P. CAMACHO
Executive Director

MANNY BOYER SABLAN
Purchasing Administrator

Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
NORTHERN MARIANAS HOUSING CORPORATION
P.O. BOX 500514, Saipan, MP 96950-0514
Email: nmhc@nmhc.gov.mp
Website: http://www.nmhcgov.net

AMENDMENT NO. 1
Notice of Re-opening of the Distribution of Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG)-COVID Program Pre-Applications

The Northern Marianas Housing Corporation (NMHC) wishes to announce the re-opening of the distribution of pre-applications of the ESG-COVID program made possible through the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act. As stated on the Office of the Governor’s Press Release, dated July 19, 2020, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) has awarded the CNMI a total allocation of $1,090,630 in ESG-COVID funds to provide financial assistance for CNMI households, specifically for rental assistance, rental arrears, utility allowance, and security and utility deposits. The assistance period is for a total of (12) months and will be on a first come, first serve basis. NMHC has allocated 25% of the grant for the elderly and disabled population. The purpose of the Emergency Solutions Grants (ESG)-COVID program is to assist individuals and families quickly regain stability in permanent housing after experiencing a housing crisis or homelessness, as a result of the Coronavirus pandemic.

Eligibility Criteria

- Must be impacted by the Coronavirus pandemic (e.g. furloughed, reduction of hours, living in substandard conditions which poses an increased risk of exposure to the disease, etc.)
- Must be a U.S. citizen or qualified alien
- Must meet the income limits (less than 50% of the area median income). See FY 2020 HUD income limits below
- Must be literally homeless or at-risk of becoming homeless and have no other housing options

Application Steps

- Pick up a pre-application at the NMHC Offices on Saipan, Tinian, and Rota or print an application made available on the NMHC website at www.nmhcgov.net.
  Link:https://nmhcgov.net/resources/files/2020%20ESG%20Pre-application%20V2%20updated%2006_29_20.pdf
- Once the pre-application is completed and submitted to the NMHC Offices (you may submit at the front office or in the Drop Box located in front of the building), the case workers will assess the pre-application and determine whether the applicant is eligible for the program. If the applicant is eligible, the case worker will schedule an appointment and immediately notify the applicant on the date and time of intake. If an applicant is deemed ineligible, a notification will be sent to the applicant.
- The case worker will inform the eligible applicant of the next steps once the application process has been completed.

If you have already applied for the ESG-COVID program, the NMHC case workers are currently assessing your pre-applications and you will be contacted for the next steps. On August 21, 2020, NMHC stopped taking pre-applications in order to conduct the screening of a significant number of pre-applications and also to conduct case management. ***NMHC re-reoped the pre-application process on October 28, 2020. You may pick up an HESG pre-application at the NMHC, Saipan Central Office, Rota Field Office, and Tinian Field office. The distribution of pre-applications will extend from November 30, 2020 to December 31, 2020.*** Should you have any questions or need special accommodations, please contact Zenie Mafnas, Deputy Corporate Director, Tricia Tenorio, Planner, or Sweetielyn Sokau, Planning Assistant, at the 234-6866/7689/9447.

NMHC is an equal employment and fair housing public agency”

TakeCare donates $100K to UOG's nursing program

The nursing program at the University of Guam's School of Health has received a $100,000 donation from TakeCare Insurance Co. The company has made the annual donation in support of the program for the past 19 years.

"This is a terrific demonstration of partnership across Guam and the whole region," said UOG president Thomas W. Krise during a virtual donation ceremony on Dec. 23. "We're very proud of our students who are busy working in their rotations and serving on the frontline of this pandemic, so it's a real occasion for pride for me and the whole Triton community."

Rose Grino, healthcare delivery administrator for FHP Health Center, which is part of TakeCare, said the pandemic has placed a spotlight on the need for nurses.

"And UOG has stepped up to respond," she said. "In graduating [UOG's nursing] Class of 2020 early…those 26 students are out there in the hospitals and different health care settings being front-liners."

The School of Health uses the TakeCare donation to fund the clinical portion of a student's nursing degree and capacity building in the nursing program by providing scholarships for faculty to obtain their doctorates. This year, it also funded an online review for students prior to taking the National Council Licensure Examination, or NCLEX. The review has contributed to UOG having a 100% NCLEX pass rate four years in a row.

"If we didn't have the TakeCare funding, I don't know if we could have been this successful with our graduates," said Margaret Hattori-Uchima, dean of the School of Health and a former scholar of the TakeCare donation. "It has relieved the burden—to know that we have the TakeCare resources to get our clinicals done, and it provides the students comfort in knowing that we've got a revenue source for NCLEX review resources in a time we can't offer that face to face." ***(UOG)***

Lions club, teen club clean up Tanapag Beach

The Saipan Unity Lions Club and Teen Unity Leos Club teamed up once again last Dec. 27 for their monthly beach cleanup at their adopted area of Tanapag Beach.

The two groups collected a total of 13 bags of trash, not only getting rid of trash from the beach's shoreline but also raising environmental awareness and making environmental information available to the Saipan community.

"The ever-increasing ocean trash, and plastic waste in particular, has produced nothing less than a global crisis for ocean waters, marine wildlife and habitat, and human health and safety," the groups said in a statement. "We [aim] to make a difference in our adopted area of Tanapag Beach."

The cleanup was led by SULC officials Alicia Barbo and Atoy Banting and STULC president Vicky Ancheta. ***(PR)***

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Members of the Saipan Unity Lions Club and Teen Unity Leos Club pose for a picture at their Dec. 27 beach cleanup in Tanapag Beach.

Kiribati will be first to welcome the new year

Kiribati is preparing to be the first country in the world to welcome the new year.

Situated in the central Pacific, Kiribati is made of 33 islands grouped into three island archipelagos: The Gilbert Islands in the west; the Phoenix Islands Protected Area in the center; and the Line Islands in the east.

The islands straddle along and across the equator at the true heart of the Pacific, where the equator meets the International Date Line. It is the only country in the world situated on all four hemispheres of the globe—northern, southern, eastern, and western.

The Line group in the Eastern part of the country will be the first in the world to welcome the year. It is currently one hour ahead of Fiji and New Zealand, three hours ahead of the east coast of Australia and 22 hours ahead of the west coast of the United States.

To celebrate this, the Tourism Authority of Kiribati will host a live feed via its official Facebook page Visit Kiribati from Kiritimati (Christmas) island on Jan. 1 to capture the world's first sunrise in 2021. The live feed will be active from 6.30am (Kiritimati time).

Kiritimati island is a world-class saltwater flats fly fishing destination offering bonefish, triggerfish, giant trevally, and numerous other species. ***(PR)***

JOB VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

Job Title: Accounting Clerk
Hours: Full-Time
Company: Yaong Corporation
Location: Unit 6 Rem Center, Gualo Rai, Saipan, MP 96950

Duties and Responsibilities:
Perform general bookkeeping duties, including checking, computation, classifying, and recording data to keep financial records. Check and verify source of documents such as invoices, purchase order and receipts. Establish and maintain chart of accounts. Maintain subsidiary accounts allocating, and posting transactions. Transfer data to general ledger. Reconcile and balance all accounts. Collate and analyze account data and generate financial reports. Comply with relevant reporting requirements. Maintain complete filing system to support financial record.

Qualification Requirements:
High School graduate with at least one year of relevant work experience in Accounting. Basic Accounting knowledge and skills, basic clerical skills, skill in Microsoft software to include MS Word and Excel, skill in an Accounting Software such as Quickbooks, good skills in Math and English, and skill in operating computers.

To apply:
Please send complete and detailed resume to: Yaong Corporation Unit 6 Rem Ctr. Cheribiyan Dr Gualo Rai, Saipan, or mail to P.O. Box 505946, Saipan, MP 96950, or by e-mail to yaong.hr2@gmail.com. Background check may be required prior to employment

DIVISION OF PROCUREMENT SERVICES
CNMI GOVERNMENT
REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS
RFP NO.: RFP21-BECQ/DCRM-005

SUBMISSION DATE: JANUARY 19, 2021 TIME: 09:00 A.M.

"ACHUGAO WATERSHED SURVEILLANCE AND MONITORING, UPLAND REFORESTATION AND ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT FOR THE BUREAU OF ENVIRONMENTAL AND COASTAL QUALITY, DIVISION OF COASTAL RESOURCES MANAGEMENT"

COPIES OF THE SPECIFICATIONS MAY BE OBTAINED AT THE OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR OF PROCUREMENT SERVICES, LOCATED AT THE FORMER EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT OFFICE, ASCENCION DRIVE, BUILDING NO. 1301, CAPITOL HILL, SAIPAN, DURING REGULAR WORKING HOURS.

****FOR YOUR SAFTEY & OURS: ALL INTERESTED INDIVIDUALS ARE REQUIRED TO USE A FACE MASK & ARE REQUIRED TO REGISTER UPON ENTRY****

ALL QUESTIONS REGARDING THIS RFP **MUST** BE SUBMITTED VIA-EMAIL TO MR. ZACHARY WILLIAMS, VIA EMAIL TO zwilliams@dcrm.gov.mp **NO LATER THAN THE CLOSE OF BUSINESS JANUARY 05, 2021**. ALL QUESTIONS SUBMITTED AFTER THE GIVEN DEADLINE WILL NOT BE ENTERTAINED. RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS SHALL BE SHARED WITH ALL PERSPECTIVE PROPOSERS.

THE PROVISIONS OF THE CNMI PROCUREMENT REGULATIONS, NMIAC SECTION 70-30.3-725 AND 70-30.3-730 PROHIBITING GRATUITIES, KICKBACKS AND CONTINGENT FEES SHALL APPLY.

THE CNMI GOVERNMENT RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY OR ALL BIDS, OR PORTIONS THEREOF, AND WAIVE IMMATERIAL DEFECTS IF TO DO SO WOULD BE IN THE BEST INTEREST OF THE CNMI GOVERNMENT.

/S/ ELI D. CABRERA
ADMINISTRATOR, BECQ

/S/ FRANCISCO C. AGUON
ACTING DIRECTOR, PS

DIVISION OF PROCUREMENT SERVICES
CNMI GOVERNMENT
REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS
ITB NO.: ITB21-DPW-024

SUBMISSION DATE: JANUARY 19, 2021 TIME: 10:00 A.M.

"PURCHASE OF FOURTEEN (14) DESKTOP COMPUTERS FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS - SAIPAN"

COPIES OF THE SPECIFICATIONS MAY BE OBTAINED AT THE OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR OF PROCUREMENT SERVICES, LOCATED AT THE FORMER EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT OFFICE, ASCENCION DRIVE, BUILDING NO. 1301, CAPITOL HILL, SAIPAN, DURING REGULAR WORKING HOURS.

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/S/ JAMES A. ADA
SECRETARY OF DPW

/S/ FRANCISCO C. AGUON
ACTING DIRECTOR, PS

Guma Hustisia COVID-19 screening zone nears completion

Construction of the COVID-19 screening and security zone in the front entryway of the Guma Hustisia in Susupe is set for completion in mid-January 2021.

Inclement weather conditions and other factors briefly delayed the project.

The area, also called the SSZ, comes in the wake of the COVID- 19 pandemic, secured by federal funds through the Coronavirus Aid Relief, and Economic Security Act. The Judiciary received its allocation of CARES Act funds from Gov. Ralph DLG Torres and Finance Secretary David DLG Atalig in June 2020. Since then, the Judiciary has used the funding to prepare for, respond to, and mitigate the spread of COVID-19 by taking up projects that will ensure compliance with social distancing mandates, implementation of sanitization measures, and reduction of in person contact.

The CNMI Judiciary's construction of its COVID-19 Screening and Security Zone continues at the front of the Guma Hustisia building. HBR International Inc. construction workers are seen in the photo working on the top portion of the screening and security zone. The ground floor will include a cashier room, queue area, vestibule, and a covered walkway/entry. Services normally provided at the courthouse entrance are currently relocated to the second floor of the Marianas Business Plaza. The construction project began in Oct. 13, 2020. NEIL FAMA

One of these projects is the 3,000 square foot SSZ, which will screen court patrons and staff while shielding them from the natural elements. In addition to security features such as scanning machines and metal detectors, the space will include a waiting area large enough for patrons and staff to comply with social distancing precautions and UV-ray light technology to disinfect the air, surfaces, and patrons' personal belongings.

"In the next week, there are several minor site works remaining to be built to meet ADA [American With Disabilities Act] requirements, including new curb and accessible ramps," said Sonia A. Camacho, director of Courts. "We are grateful for CARES Act funding allocated to the Judiciary to make this important project possible."

The SSZ joins other ongoing projects at the Guma Hustisia, including those for mold remediation and installation of a new air-conditioning system. At the current pace, these projects will allow the Judiciary to reopen two Superior Court courtrooms by mid-January. Full occupancy of the Guma Hustisia is anticipated in June 2021.

"The Judiciary appreciates the public's patience and cooperation as it continues to ensure a safe and healthy environment for all who visit the Guma Hustisia in the upcoming months," said the Judiciary in a statement last Tuesday. ***(PR)***

MCS AlumKnight wins screenplay competition

Justin P. Ocampo, a member of Mount Carmel School's Class of 2019, recently won the University of Hawaii Manoa Abernathy Screenplay Competition that gives him a chance to write an original screenplay that could possibly be turned into a film.

Mount Carmel School's 2019 AlumKnight Justin P. Ocampo. MCS

The competition is an annual contest that provides undergraduates in the Academy for Creative Media the opportunity to write an original screenplay and provide monetary funding to produce their screenplays into films. Competitors were scored on originality, creativity, unique voice, structure, screenplay format, articulation of character arc, and thematic meaning. Selected winners of the competition earn a $250 award and $500 to produce their screenplay in an Academy for Creative Media course.

"I applied for the Abernathy competition because I believed in my vision for the film so strongly that I knew I had to produce it and that this competition was one of the best ways I could guarantee that to happen," said Ocampo. "The competition gives an extra monetary award to go toward production costs for when I choose to make it in a production class here at UH."

Ocampo is no stranger to film making. As a student at MCS, he was greatly involved in the production of the school's *We Drank Our Tears* series, including *Benjamin Abadilla's Story, The Stories of Carmen, Antonietta, and Rosa*, the combined stories of Visitacion, Henry Indalceio, and Dave Sablan. In 2018, Justin co-directed *The Story of Rafael Mafnas*, alongside his peer, Angelo Manese, which won Best of Festival at the Guam International Film Festival that year and was featured in the 2018 Los Angeles Asian-Pacific Islander Film Festival.

When asked about what his screenplay is about, Ocampo said, "The primary message of Tala is that acting compassionately leads to stronger familial relationships. Tala, the protagonist, learns this throughout the course of the story. Since this was a personal story for me that was based on my own upbringing, this was a lesson I've lived through as well."

MCS president and theatre program adviser Dr. Galvin Deleon Guerrero shared his own pride as MCS students continue to challenge the status quo of their careers. "It has been an exciting honor to mentor Justin since he was in junior high and watch him grow into an amazing young filmmaker with whom I now work as a colleague," said Deleon Guerrero. "Whether on stage, in film, or even at the podium, Justin deftly blends skill, passion, and authenticity to deliver compelling stories with powerful messages."

Ocampo was also active in the school's Mock Trial program and won the 2018 Attorney General's Cup Speech Competition.

"Mount Carmel School, particularly the school's Theatre Club, was where my love for film was born. By giving me the opportunity to direct *We Drank Our Tears: Rafael Mafnas' Story* and help with a multitude of other film and theatre productions, MCS gave me an edge in terms of having a wealth of pre- and post-production experience to draw from before having even begun any formal film education, which was extremely valuable once for me once I got to UH. I'm extremely grateful and excited to continue challenging myself and to gain new professional experiences." ***(PR)***

Free webinars on federal contracting

The Guam Procurement Technical Assistance Center is offering free live webinars that run from 10am to 11:30am and will be conducted via Zoom. Links to the live webinar and the webinar evaluation will be emailed to all registered attendees 15 minutes before the start of the webinar.

■ **Dec. 30 – Buy American Act** – The Buy American Act can be frustrating for government contractors. The Guam PTAC will discuss the BAA and offer some guidance on how to stay in compliance.

■ **Jan. 7 – Service Contract Act** – The Service Contract Act requires contractors and subcontractors performing services on prime contracts in excess of $2,500 to pay service employees prevailing wages. We will discuss the details of the SCA and how contractors can stay in compliance.

■ **Jan. 14 – DUNS/SAM** – To sell your product or service to the Federal government, you need to get a DUNS number and register in SAM. These registrations pose unique challenges to Guam/CNMI based businesses. Tips and solutions for these challenges will be discussed.

■ **Jan. 21 – Federal Contract Opportunities** – Beta.sam.gov is the portal for Federal Contract Opportunities. The Guam PTAC will show you how to setup an account and how to use the search filters to ensure you do not miss any opportunities.

■ **Jan. 28 – Marketing to the Federal Government** – The government buys products and services differently than the private sector. The Guam PTAC will discuss marketing strategies, essential documents, and how to get your company on "the list".

Register at http://guamptac.com/news-and-events.php. ***(PR)***

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Granite Construction Co Guam has employment opportunites for the following trades for a project located in **Saipan CNMI**:

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Masons (10)
Ironworkers (10)
Laborers (10)

Project: FEMA Permanent Housing Construction, Saipan CNMI

Only U.S Qualified Workers Will Be Considered

Please pick up an application at
Room Number 239 at the Surfrider Hotel Resort,
Chalan Kanoa, Beach Road, Saipan.

Hours of Operation: 7:00 am to 4:00 pm
Telephone: 670-235-7873

Deadline to apply is December 30, 2020

Granite Construction Co Guam is an Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity Employer of Minorities, Females, Protected Veterans, Individuals With Disabilities and is a Drug-Alcohol Free Work Place.

Opinion

Hafa Adai!
Saipan Tribune
THE CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER
Volume XXX, Issue No. 258

Published daily at 2/F JP Center,
Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, CNMI
Mailing Address: PMB 34, Box 10001, Saipan, MP, 96950

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The Associated Press | Pacific Islands News Association

EDITORIAL

How the Biden administration can help get the US vaccinated

President-elect Joe Biden says he's going to ask Americans to cover their faces in public for the first 100 days of his presidency. Urging people to wear masks is entirely reasonable. It's exactly what people should do to minimize coronavirus infections as vaccination proceeds. Yet after almost a year with no such commonsense guidance from the White House, Biden's modest request seems almost shocking—a sad commentary on the lack of leadership to this point.

Guiding America toward prudence in coping with COVID-19 is going to be no less important as vaccines become more widely available.

People need clear information and guidance about the vaccines' safety and potential side effects, so that most people are willing to get the shots. If fewer than four out of five are vaccinated, it may not be enough to stem the coronavirus' spread. Encouragingly, resistance to COVID-19 vaccines has been waning since news of their extraordinary effectiveness first broke. The share of Americans who say they would accept a vaccine that was free and certified as safe has risen to 71%, from 63% in September, according to a Kaiser Family Foundation survey.

As inoculations are carried out, there'll be reports of side effects. This is inevitable. People often feel pain and swelling in their arms after getting the shot. Fever, chills, headache and fatigue are common. And a handful of people in the U.K. and in Alaska have suffered allergic reactions. (Health officials recommend that people be monitored for allergy symptoms for 15 minutes after getting their shots.) The clinical trials suggest that nearly one in six people may not feel up to working on the days they get their shots. The public needs to be told what to expect—and to understand these reactions aren't dangerous and go away quickly.

Biden's administration should therefore move promptly to restore the Centers for Disease Control's leadership in pandemic response. Regular public briefings on all the pandemic trends—the number of people infected and hospitalized, the number of deaths, the number of people vaccinated, the percentage experiencing side effects, any new side effects that might arise, and whether mutations in the virus like the one now reported in the U.K. are making it more or less transmissible or dangerous—can provide a clear account of progress against COVID-19. CDC experts can answer the public's questions and address anxieties.

This won't persuade all Americans to mask up, keep their distance and so on. These behaviors have become absurdly politicized. This month, as just one illustration, the mayor of Dodge City, Kansas, was driven from office by death threats after America learned about the city commission's vote to require mask-wearing indoors.

The backlash against simple and effective public-health measures has been perhaps the biggest and most glaring

See BIDEN on Next Page

The wealthiest Americans are putting Scrooge to shame

By ALAN S. DAVIS
Los Angeles Times

Alan S. Davis is a member of the Patriotic Millionaires, president of the Leonard and Sophie Davis Fund and founder of the Crisis Charitable Commitment.

For most Americans, 2020 has been one long, terrifying nightmare—with a raging pandemic that's claimed more than 315,000 lives, a devastating economic crisis and a national reckoning on racial injustice. But it certainly hasn't been equally disastrous for everyone.

If you thought the wealth gap between Ebenezer Scrooge and Bob Cratchit was vast in *A Christmas Carol*, the difference between the haves and have-nots in 2020 would be enough to make Charles Dickens' head spin.

What would Dickens write about today's America, where the total wealth gains of America's 650 billionaires have surpassed $1 trillion since March? Where Jeff Bezos has seen his fortune increase by $72 billion during the pandemic, while Amazon faces intense criticism for failing to keep its workers safe even as thousands of them fall ill? Where billionaires have reportedly given less than a tenth of 1% of their wealth to COVID-19 pandemic relief?

Shamefully, as billionaires' wealth continues to skyrocket, so have the number of Americans in unemployment lines, food banks and homeless shelters. This holiday season alone, tens of millions of people—1 in 6 Americans (disproportionately from communities of color)—don't have enough to eat.

As the pandemic hands windfall profits to the billionaire class, our nation's charities, particularly those serving the disadvantaged, are running out of money. Without major investments, as many as 40% of nonprofits could close over the next year just as they're needed to help rebuild communities most damaged by the pandemic and economic crises.

Racing to fill this gap, a group of 57 ultra-high-net-worth individuals (defined as those worth at least $30 million or the top 0.1%) and some of America's most respected foundations and I launched the Crisis Charitable Commitment.

The idea is to set standards for the minimum level of annual giving from America's wealthiest individuals and foundations so that more money can flow to organizations that can put those funds to work right away. Those who meet the benchmark would set a powerful example for what philanthropy should be doing in this time of national crisis.

The math is relatively simple. The wealthiest 0.1% have an estimated tax base of around $11 trillion, but give away only around 1% annually to charity. An additional $1 trillion is parked in private foundations (where only 5% annually has to go to charities) and donor-advised funds—for which wealthy contributors can enjoy tax benefits from both of as much as 74% (and even more in high-income-tax states like California).

The Crisis Charitable Commitment's benchmarks aim to effectively double the average annual amount of charitable giving from these philanthropic sources. The formula, like wealth tax proposals at the federal and state levels, is based on asset brackets, with higher percentages in higher brackets.

For example, an individual with $500 million in assets should give a minimum of $13.25 million annually (donation levels rise significantly higher up the wealth ladder). A foundation with a $1-billion endowment should give $98 million—which is far more than the $50 million or the 5% of net asset value that foundations are required by law to spend annually.

Based on the Crisis Charitable Commitment formula, Jeff Bezos, who has a net worth of $187 billion, should be giving $9.1 billion this year. Elon Musk, worth $167 billion, should be giving $8.1 billion. Mark Zuckerberg, worth $105 billion, should be giving $5 billion.

Collectively, applying the CCC formula, these three would donate more than $22 billion in 2020. This would be a small share of their wealth, given that combined they've made an astronomical $267 billion during the pandemic. But it would undoubtedly make a huge difference to struggling charities.

Just ask the 500 beneficiaries of the extraordinary $5.8 billion in contributions made by MacKenzie Scott this year—$4.1 billion of which went to 384 organizations over the last four months. Scott is the rare billionaire who accelerated her giving during the pandemic.

It took visits on Christmas Eve from spirits of Christmas Past, Present and Future for Scrooge to face up to his moral responsibilities. But in 2020, not even the worst pandemic since 1918, the worst economic collapse since the Great Depression, or a country gripped with racial injustice and political discontent reminiscent of 1968 have yet compelled the nation's billionaires to recognize their privilege and responsibility. It's going to take public pressure from the American people.

The billionaires who have benefited most during the pandemic should be following Scott's example. Meeting the reasonable benchmarks set forth in the Crisis Charitable Commitment would be one step toward changing philanthropic norms and getting more aid to Americans in need right now.

History shows our passion for freedom runs deep

By KATHARINE C. GORKA
The Heritage Foundation

Katharine C. Gorka is the director for Civil Society and the American Dialogue at The Heritage Foundation.

Christmas 2020 was a Christmas like no other in our nation's history. Thousands of churches across the country were shuttered, others had to hold services outdoors or restrict capacity indoors. Families were not allowed to gather for the holiday.

Many Americans are rightly upset that the freedom to worship—the foundational American freedom—has been curtailed. For some it felt as if we gave up without a fight, and that what is now gone will be lost forever. But the past tells a different story. While we have never experienced what we are going through now, the past tells us that the passion for freedom runs deep in this nation, and it will not be easily squelched.

First and foremost, of course, is the very founding of the nation by the many who came for religious freedom. Not only did they face persecution at home and a difficult ocean voyage, but once here, they still faced many challenges. The passengers of the Mayflower Compact never expected to be blown hundreds of miles off course, to land in a place where their existing patent had no standing. But with the Mayflower Compact, they crafted a powerful agreement that established self-rule, their right to worship as they wished, and the rule of law. In that simple act, they laid the foundation for a nation that would become a beacon of freedom.

A lesser known but perhaps more important moment occurred in 1657. A new sect of believers had emerged in England in the 1650s: the Religious Society of Friends, derisively referred to as Quakers, for their belief that people should "tremble at the word of the Lord." They were considered radicals and were persecuted, in some cases even executed. They sought safety in the New World. One Quaker named Robert Hodgson began to preach to crowds in New Netherland (today, New York), but for that was arrested and flogged. Peter Stuyvesant, director general of New Netherland, subsequently forbade people from allowing Quakers into their towns or giving them shelter in their homes. When his strictures were challenged, he is said to have responded, "We derive our authority from God and the West India Company, not from the pleasure of a few ignorant subjects."

On Dec. 27, 1657, Tobias Feake, the sheriff of Vlissingen, New Netherland (today known as Flushing, New York), and the town clerk, Edward Clark, drafted a petition calling for acceptance of the beliefs of others and their right to accept Quakers into their towns and homes. They persuaded 28 of their fellow citizens to stand with them in signing the petition. More importantly, the petition they drafted, known as the Flushing Remonstrance, survives as one of the most beautiful and inspiring statements of the American spirit.

In rejecting the prohibition against receiving or entertaining Quakers, the signatories of the Flushing Remonstrance stated:

"We desire therefore in this case not to judge least we be judged, neither to condemn least we be condemned, but rather let every man stand or fall to his own Master …

"Therefore if any of these said persons come in love unto us, we cannot in conscience lay violent hands upon them, but give them free egresse and regresse unto our Town, and houses, as God shall persuade our consciences, for we are bounde by the law of God and man to doe good unto all men and evil to noe man."

Feake and Clark paid a heavy price for this act of conscience: they were imprisoned and fined. But their spirit of resistance prevailed. Eventually the Dutch West India Company ordered Stuyvesant to "allow everyone to have his own belief." A little over 100 years later, the right to freedom of belief was codified in the Bill of Rights. Indeed, we tend to think of Thomas Jefferson as the father of our freedoms for having inspired the Bill of Rights, or James Madison for having drafted them, but the path to those freedoms was paved by ordinary citizens, such as the 30 who signed the Flushing Remonstrance.

Winston Churchill said, "The future is unknowable, but the past should give us hope." As we wait to be allowed to return to our churches and synagogues, we should remember that small band of 30 citizens in Flushing, New York, and remind ourselves that the American commitment to liberty does not depend on singular individuals such as James Madison or Thomas Jefferson, or on a president or governor, but it depends fully on the love for liberty each one of us holds and the lengths we are willing to go to uphold it.

The ugly world of vaccination politics

By ROBERT A. GEORGE
Bloomberg Opinion

Robert A. George writes editorials on education and other policy issues for Bloomberg Opinion. He was previously a member of the editorial boards of the New York Daily News *and* New York Post.

The Christmas gift many Americans are eager for this year arrived a few days early: a vaccine against COVID-19. Unfortunately, there is no such inoculation against political opportunism—which is exactly what those who criticize politicians for getting the vaccine are engaging in.

Last week, Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez recorded herself getting her COVID vaccine shot and shared it with her 8.2 million Instagram followers. This being 2020 (and this being AOC), her decision attracted a lot of criticism, much of it along the lines that she's only 31 and not likely to face serious health issues if she contracts COVID. Then 49-year-old Sen. Marco Rubio also got his shot—and also found himself criticized, as a reckless hypocrite for getting it after having attended campaign rallies for President Donald Trump where few people wore masks.

As a matter of law, all members of Congress, as part of the legislative branch of government, are eligible to "cut the line" for a vaccine, regardless of their age, thanks to continuity-of-government protocols. Last week, under the same protocol, Vice President Mike Pence got his shot.

Still, the question is legitimate: Just because elected officials are allowed to get the vaccine, should they? Some congressional colleagues of Rubio and Ocasio-Cortez—including AOC ally and fellow squad-member Rep. Ilhan Omar—say the answer is no.

"We are not more important then frontline workers, teachers, etc. who are making sacrifices everyday," Omar tweeted on Sunday. "Which is why I won't take it. People who need it most, should get it." Omar's choice puts her in agreement with Republican Sens. Ted Cruz and Rand Paul—maybe the first and last time that's likely to happen.

But AOC has good reason, beyond a self-serving, jump-the-line one, for getting vaccinated. As she tweeted, she had to "weigh the potential misinfo consequences of what wld happen if leaders urged ppl to take a new vaccine that we weren't taking ourselves."

COVID has taken a terrible toll among Black and Hispanic communities. In the spring, when New York City was the epicenter of the pandemic's first wave, Ocasio-Cortez's Bronx-Queens district was the epicenter of the epicenter. At one point the district, which is 58% Black and Hispanic, had more cases than all of Manhattan, despite having one million fewer inhabitants.

AOC is also right that there is skepticism about the vaccine in minority communities. Two weeks ago, I had a conversation with my sister. She lives in Atlanta, with her two daughters and our mother. "You're not going to take that vaccine now," she told me, in a friendly tone. It wasn't a question. When I told her I didn't have any concerns about the vaccine, she said that the speed with which it was developed made her nervous.

And, no, this wasn't about Trump. My sister was wary about what she saw as a general rush to get vaccines approved. My pushback on the historic importance of the polio vaccine rollout was met with a reminder that a "bad" batch of live polio sent from a lab had led to infection and death. Restoring the public's trust required getting Elvis Presley to take a shot just before going on "The Ed Sullivan Show."

Our conversation probably wasn't too dissimilar from those taking place among families across the country—particularly in Black and brown households. My sister didn't bring up the Tuskegee experiment (our family is largely West Indian-born), but that episode—of Black men observed but untreated for syphilis over 40 years, until the experiment was ended in 1972—still casts a long shadow.

There is probably no modern-day pop-culture equivalent of Elvis. So instead, America has members of Congress (and vice presidents and presidents-elect) getting vaccinated.

There are legitimate points on both sides of the debate over whether members of Congress should be rushing to get vaccinated. But on this issue, in the spirit of the holidays, maybe it's appropriate to give our elected officials the benefit of the doubt.

BIDEN

From Page 8

weakness in the U.S. COVID-19 response. American scientists have helped create near-miraculous vaccines in record time. American doctors have helped hone the medical response to COVID-19, keeping more and more patients alive. But the U.S. does poorly when it comes to guiding behavior. Divided by politics, too many Americans see their freedom to ignore simple public-health advice not just as a right but almost as an obligation.

The faster such intransigence fades in the months ahead, the faster the country can use vaccinations to achieve herd immunity. Once Biden takes office, the White House will at least be trying to unite and not divide the country. It's about time—and with luck this will make a big difference in stamping out the pandemic.

© 2020 *Bloomberg*

New Year's poems

Jack Sprat's 2021 Diet Resolution

"Jack Sprat could eat no fat his wife could eat no lean
and so betwixt the two of them they licked the platter clean."
—An old English rhyme first published in 1639

He dyed his hair, to see any white on top was rare
she did the same too until her gray hair turned blue
he wore young people's hats and clothing styles
walked around farmer's markets and malls for miles.

She bought gaudy rags from a used clothes thrift store
clearance clothes from big box stores, more and more
they had fallen in love at a bookstore reading cookbooks
one tried putting on, the other losing, any more weight.

They didn't want to gain or lose and didn't feel very old
ate what they wanted from recipes in cookbooks they read
paid no attention to their heart doctor's obesity/skinny scold
loved creamy, rich, fried foods and slathered butter on bread.

On their respective sizes they were never unkind or mean
between the two of them they kept licking the platter clean.

My Last Five Teeth

Three cinquains explains. Cinquains are five unrhymed line poems invented by Adelaide Crapsey (1878 – 1914). MAD Magazine, a comic magazine, had a cartoon character named Alfred E. Newman who had big ears and a gap-toothed smile. He would appear on the cover asking, "What? Me Worry?"

Drooling
gumming my teeth
not too many are left
bananas are easy to eat
old age.

New bridge
gleaming white fangs
chewing bubble gum now
mastication situation
bubbles.

Smiling
what me worry?
now I won't look so Mad
Magazine's Alfred E. Newman
tooth gap.

LITERARY NOOK

By JOEY 'PEPE BATBON' CONNOLLY
Special to the Saipan Tribune

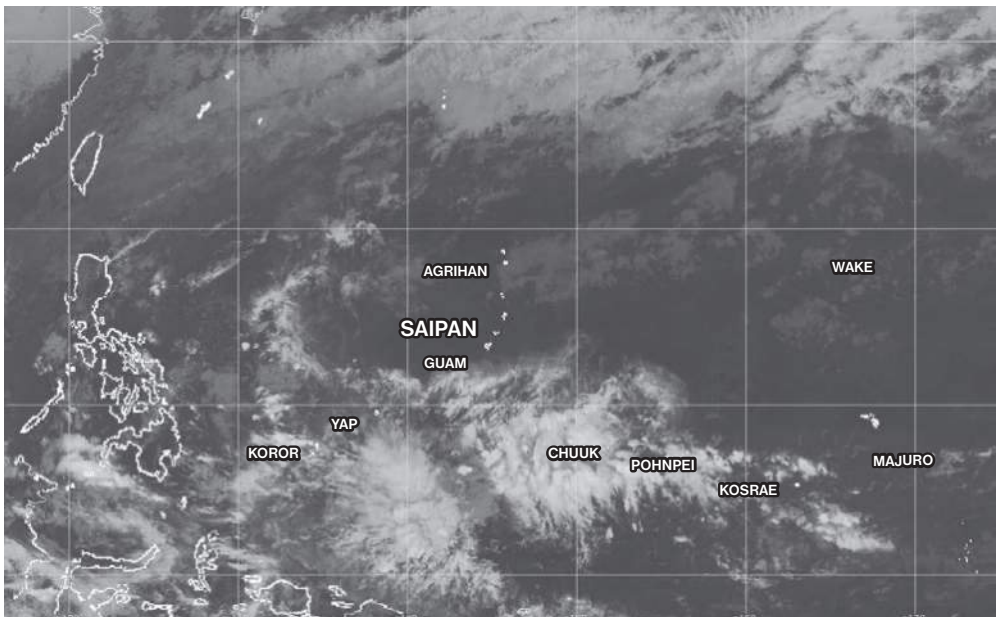
Joey aka Pepe Batbon is a retired educator who taught in the CNMI, NOLA, and LVNV. He is a sonnet practitioner who enjoys stargazing.

The Weather

5-DAY FORECAST FOR SAIPAN AND TINIAN

TODAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
Partly cloudy with isolated showers. East winds 10 to 15 mph.	Partly sunny with isolated showers. East winds 10 to 15 mph.	Mostly cloudy with isolated showers.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.	Partly cloudy. Isolated showers.
86° 77°	86° 77°	86° 77°	87° 77°	87° 77°

YESTERDAY'S SATELLITE IMAGE



PICTURE TIME: 6:52 AM, TUESDAY, DECEMBER 29, 2020

Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

Moderate trade winds, partly cloudy skies, and only isolated light showers are seen this morning across the Marianas. Combined seas range from 5 to 8 feet at the buoys.

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam homepage: www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/

STOP THE SPREAD

The Governor's COVID-19 Task Force and Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. continue to encourage residents within the Marianas to practice social distancing, which means avoiding close contact with people in order to avoid catching the virus yourself and to avoid passing it on to others.

- Stay home as much as possible. Avoid unnecessary travel or public places.
- Avoid social gatherings in groups of more than 10.
- Choose drive-thru, take-out, or delivery options, or outdoor seating, if available, when dining in.
- Send only one healthy adult from the household run necessary errands, such as getting groceries or picking up medications. Leave children, elderly, and other vulnerable people at home as much as possible. When returning home from an errand, wash your hands before doing anything else.
- Older adults and people with chronic medical conditions are at higher risk of getting very sick from this illness. People at high risk should stay at home as much as possible.
- Create a household plan of action, https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prepare/checklisthousehold-ready.html
- Ensure a 30-day supply of all medicines.

Continue good hand hygiene

- Wash your hands for at least 20 seconds with soap and water, avoid touching your face, cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue or your sleeve.
- Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap and water are not readily available.

Know the signs and symptoms of COVID-19 and what to do if you become symptomatic

- Stay home when you are sick and if you recently traveled to a place with COVID-19. Self-quarantine means:
- ❏ Choosing a room in your house that can be used to separate sick household members from others.
- ❏ Washing your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- ❏ Avoiding touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- ❏ Limiting visitors

CHCC appreciates the patience and understanding of the community at this time. To obtain general information about the CNMI COVID-19 response, contact the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force Hotline at 287-0046, 287-0489, 287-1089. These numbers are available Monday to Sunday, 7:30am - 4:30pm.

For medical information about COVID-19, reach out to the COVID-19 Infoline at the following numbers: 285-1672/1352. These numbers are available Monday to Friday, 7:30am - 4:30pm.

For mental health support and helpful tips during a crisis, call the Mental Health Support Line at 285-1856, 323-6560, 323-6561 These numbers are available Monday to Friday, 7:30am - 4:30 pm. For the 24/7 Disaster Distress Helpline, call SAMSHA at 1-800-985-5990.

For more information about DIY face coverings, visit https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/cloth-face-cover.html

For more information about CHCC programs, follow CHCC on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter at @cnmichcc, check out our website at www.chcc.gov.mp or call us at (670) 234-8950.

For more information on the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force, visit www.governor.gov.mpand, follow @GovernorCNMI on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter.

This health advisory may be found online at http://www.chcc.gov.mp/pressrelease.html and at www.governor.gov.mp/covid-19.

Rumor control

During crises like this, oftentimes the spread of misinformation is just as dangerous as the virus itself. The CNMI is reminded to only share official and verified notices, press releases, and advisories from the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force and CHCC.

Source: Office of the Governor

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SUBSCRIPTION Published Monday to Friday, *Saipan Tribune* offers door-to-door on-island delivery at an annual rate of $180. For additional subscription information, call (670) 235-8747 or 235-2769, or fax 235-3740.

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MICRONESIA	▲ ▼ °F	
Guam and Rota	Windy	86° / 78°
Palau	Thunderstorms	84° / 78°
Yap	Showers	86° / 80°
Chuuk	Thunderstorms	85° / 79°
Pohnpei	Showers	85° / 78°
Kosrae	Showers	85° / 78°
Majuro	Partly Cloudy	85° / 81°

DAY	SUNRISE	SUNSET
Today	6:42 AM	5:56 PM
Thursday	6:42 AM	5:57 PM
Friday	6:43 AM	5:57 PM
Saturday	6:43 AM	5:58 PM
Saturday	6:43 AM	5:59 PM

DAY	MOONRISE	MOONSET	MOONRISE
Today	-	6:33 AM	6:01 PM
Thursday	-	7:27 AM	6:56 PM
Friday	-	8:19 AM	7:53 PM
Saturday	-	9:09 AM	8:51 PM
Saturday	-	9:56 AM	9:47 PM

AROUND THE GLOBE	▲ ▼ °F	
Auckland	Windy	70° / 63°
Beijing	Sunny	36° / 18°
Hong Kong	Cloudy	68° / 64°
Honolulu	Mostly Sunny	79° / 72°
London	Partly Cloudy	39° / 30°
Los Angeles	Sunny	67° / 45°
Manila	Sunny	84° / 73°
Melbourne	Mostly Sunny	104° / 61°
Miami	Mostly Sunny	80° / 73°
New York	Showers	44° / 41°
Osaka	Sunny	52° / 39°
Paris	Partly Cloudy	43° / 30°
Busan	Sunny	48° / 34°
Rome	Sunny	45° / 28°
Salem	Rain	62° / 55°
San Francisco	Sunny	54° / 43°
Seoul	Sunny	41° / 19°
Tokyo	Partly Cloudy	48° / 34°
Washington, DC	Showers	48° / 34°

TIDES: SAIPAN HARBOR TODAY		FEET
1:45 AM	Low Tide	-0.50
8:58 AM	High Tide	1.65
2:13 PM	Low Tide	1.06
6:55 PM	High Tide	1.64

FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF NOVEMBER 1, 2020

DEPARTURES

SAIPAN-GUAM (GUM)

UA117	6:55am	7:35am	1, 4, 6

SAIPAN-MANILA (MNL)

UA117/183	6:55am	9:50pm	1 via Guam

GUAM-MANILA (MNL)

UA183	8:00pm	9:50pm	1, 3, 5

ARRIVALS

GUAM (GUM)-SAIPAN

UA174	5:10am	5:51am	1, 4, 6

MANILA (MNL)-SAIPAN

UA184/174	10:40pm	5:51am+1	3, 5 via Guam

MANILA (MNL)-GUAM

UA184	10:40pm	4:30am+1	1, 3, 5

LEGEND: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); UA United Airlines • ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. *(The Saipan Tribune is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)*

STAR MARIANAS AIR, INC.

FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF OCTOBER 8, 2020

SAIPAN TO ROTA

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
1301	8:30AM	9:00AM	Mon/Tues/Wed/Thurs/Fri
1302	11:00AM	11:30AM	Mon/Tues/Wed/Thurs/Fri
1303	3:30PM	4:00PM	Mon/Wed/Fri

ROTA TO SAIPAN

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
3101	9:30AM	10:00AM	Mon/Tues/Wed/Thurs/Fri
3102	12:00AM	12:30AM	Mon/Tues/Wed/Thurs/Fri
3103	4:30PM	5:00PM	Mon/Wed/Fri

ROTA TO GUAM

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
3401	12:15	12:45	Temporarily Unavailable

GUAM TO ROTA

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
4301	13:00	13:30	Temporarily Unavailable

SAIPAN TO TINIAN

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
1201	7:00	7:15	Temporarily Unavailable
1202	8:00	8:15	Daily
1203	9:00	9:15	Daily
1204	10:00	10:15	Temporarily Unavailable
1205	11:00	11:15	Temporarily Unavailable
1206	12:00	12:15	Temporarily Unavailable
1207	13:00	13:15	Temporarily Unavailable
1208	14:00	14:15	Temporarily Unavailable
1209	15:00	15:15	Daily
1210	16:00	16:15	Daily
1211	17:00	17:15	Temporarily Unavailable
1212	18:00	18:15	Temporarily Unavailable

TINIAN TO SAIPAN

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
2101	7:30	7:45	Temporarily Unavailable
2102	8:30	8:45	Daily
2103	9:30	9:45	Daily
2104	10:30	10:45	Temporarily Unavailable
2105	11:30	11:45	Temporarily Unavailable
2106	12:30	12:45	Temporarily Unavailable
2107	13:30	13:45	Temporarily Unavailable
2108	14:30	14:45	Temporarily Unavailable
2109	15:30	15:45	Daily
2110	16:30	16:45	Daily
2111	17:30	17:45	Temporarily Unavailable
2112	18:30	18:45	Temporarily Unavailable

Business

Local favorite lands at Kada Dia

By MARK RABAGO
mark_rabago@saipantribune.com
ASSOCIATE EDITOR

MARK RABAGO

Aside from its signature *charakilis*, Magbers Snack Bar is also known for its *ahu*, corn soup, all types of *empanada*, *finadeni denanche, titiyas, bonelos aga,* and *lantiyas*.

A Sabalu Market legend that specializes in *charakilis*, corn soup, and ahu has relocated to Kada Dia and renamed itself Magbers Snack Bar.

Whether it be MII-Enterprises or Magbers, the newly-opened snack bar in the middle of Chalan Kanoa still serves the best local comfort food on island, something it's been known for since 1995.

Founded by Manuel and Angie Borja more than two decades ago, MII-Enterprises was responsible for the early morning long lines of people at the Sabalu Market. But then the COVID-19 pandemic came to Saipan, which essentially forced all vendors at the Civic Center location to shut down.

Fortunately, MII-Enterprises was able to secure a location at the newly-built Kada Dia everyday market, which is just a stone's throw away from the U.S. Post Office in Saipan's former main village of Chalan Kanoa.

For more information or to order food in advance, call 783-8433 or 483-6938

"They [public] have been looking for us for a while now. When we moved here, some people asked if this is the Borja at the Sabalu Market, and when we said yes, they'd say, 'Oh my gosh we've been looking for you guys for a long time…," said Geraldine Borja, the eldest daughter of Manuel and Angie.

She explained that James Matsumoto, owner of BPJ Ventures, LLC that owns the Kada Dia Market, actually approached Geraldine Borja's parents and asked "if they want to open at Kada Dia?" They said "yes" and the rest, as they say, is history.

She added that since moving to Kada Dia in November, Magbers has received nothing but good reviews from old and new customers alike. "Reception has been very good, especially in the morning that even before we open there's already a long line in the parking lot, which is reminiscent of our Sabalu Market days."

Geraldine Borja said Magbers actually is an amalgamation of the family members' first names: M is for Manuel, A for Angie, G for Geraldine, B for Bernadine, E for Ester, R for Rose, and S for Stephanie.

MARK RABAGO

Geraldine Borja, right, and daughter Jayline pose in front of the Magbers Snack Bar in Kada Dia.

"We're better known as MII-Enterprises but when we opened at Kada Dia we needed something catchy. That's why a lot of people didn't know it's the same owner. But we're the same snack bar everyone has always loved."

The tried-and-tested *charakilis* remains Magber's No. 1 seller. *Charakilis* is similar to the Filipinos' arroz caldo but, instead of just boiling the rice, ingenious local cooks toasted and, in lieu of ginger, they use garlic, which explains the aroma always emanating from stalls serving the local favorite.

Borja said she has no idea how many bowls of *charakilis* they make in a day, but she remembers that her parents would use 16 5-gallon water bottles to make the *charakilis* at their old Sabalu Market food tent. It's safe to say that they make more than that at the brick-and-mortar location of Magbers.

Aside from its signature *charakilis*, Magbers is also known for its *ahu*, a local version of the Filipino bilo-bilo; corn soup; all types of *empanada*; *finadeni denanche; titiyas; bonelos aga;* and *lantiyas*. Borja said they also serve local lunches in bento boxes.

Magbers is also a good neighbor at Kada Dia as it long decided not to offer the same food items that other stalls in the location also sell. "We sold barbecue sticks and cheeseburgers before at the Sabalu Market, but I talked to my parents and said, 'Let's give other vendors a chance to do well and will do our own, which is local food. …Let's not do duplicates and not sell what others are already selling,'" said Borja.

As far as future plans are concerned, Magbers is at the moment looking to expand and is scouting for a second location. "Actually right now, we're just trying this out but, as soon as we find a certain location, we might open another Magbers. We have big plans on the way," she said.

Magbers is located at the Kada Dia Eveyday Market in Chalan Kanoa. It is open Monday-Saturday from 6:30am to 5pm and is closed on Sunday. For more information or to order food in advance, call 783-8433 or 483-6938 or reach them via their Facebook page: MII-Enterprise dba Magbers Snack Bar.

New Year's Eve fireworks show at Kensington, PIC

By BEA CABRERA
beacabrerasaipan@gmail.com
CORRESPONDENT

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Catch the oceanside get filled by fireworks on New Year's Eve at Pacific Island Club in San Antonio.

As we draw close to the end of the year, a year that was dominated by the COVID-19 pandemic, Micronesia Resort Inc. wants the community to look forward to a new year with new hope.

For more information, call Kensington Hotel at 322-3311 and PIC Saipan 234-7976 ext. 2.

Whether you live in the north or south of Saipan, Micronesia Resort has got you covered this New Year's Eve with firework shows at Pacific Islands Club Saipan in San Antonio and Kensington Hotel in San Roque.

According to Sales and Marketing manager Katy Hung, the community can look forward to big celebrations at Kensington and PIC Saipan. "At Kensington Hotel, the best spot to enjoy the fireworks will be at OHAS Café and Infinity Pool…the celebration starts at 10pm with a live band performing at OHAS where guests can enjoy the time of their lives with finger food and welcome drinks, which is included in the admission fee for only $30… For those who want to watch the fireworks display from the Infinity Pool, there will be unlimited beer and champagne at the poolside bar and a DJ playing good music in the background," she said.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Watch the New Year's fireworks display from OHAS or Infinity Pool at Kensington Hotel in San Roque.

"Beloved by locals, PIC Saipan will have a firework show with amazing beach view and PIC's unique ambience… celebration starts at 8pm, live band will be performing at Buoy Bar. At 9pm, assorted canapés and free-flowing draft beer and champagne will be served at The Magellan. Admission fee is only $35 for adults and $15 for children," she added.

Hung said that Micronesia Resort management knows how extremely difficult year 2020 for all of us. "…that's why Kensington Hotel and PIC Saipan will continue the firework show on Dec 31st, a celebration in the sky for a better year to come… also, the safety and security of our guests and employees is our top priority and with that in mind, reservation is highly recommended."

"Getting guests' reservation early will give them opportunity to get the best spot to enjoy the firework shows at Kensington and PIC," she added.

For more information, call Kensington Hotel at 322-3311 and PIC Saipan 234-7976 ext. 2.

STOCK PORTFOLIO

LEADING INDICATORS

S&P	DOW	NASDAQ
3,742.00	30,460.00	12,867.00
+14.50	+155.00	+34.25
+0.39%	+0.51%	+0.27%

EXCHANGE RATES

In U.S. dollar terms

Australian Dollar	1.32	Hong Kong Dollar	7.75	Russian Ruble	74.02
British Pound	0.74	Indian Rupee	73.41	Singapore Dollar	1.33
Canadian Dollar	1.28	Japanese Yen	103.68	South Korean Won	1091.90
Chinese Yuan	6.53	Malaysian Ringgit	4.05	Swiss Franc	0.89
Euro	0.82	New Zealand Dollar	1.40	Taiwan Dollar	28.12
		Philippine Peso	48.02	Thailand Baht	30.17

Nation

Biden warns of Trump officials' 'roadblocks' to transition

WILMINGTON, Del. (AP)—President-elect Joe Biden is warning of massive damage done to the national security apparatus by the Trump administration and "roadblocks" in communication between agency officials and his transition team that could undermine Americans' security.

During remarks Monday in Wilmington, Delaware, Biden said his team has faced "obstruction" from the "political leadership" at the Defense Department and the Office of Management and Budget as they've sought to gather necessary information to continue the transition of power.

"Right now we just aren't getting all the information that we need from the outgoing administration in key national security areas. It's nothing short, in my view, of irresponsibility," Biden said.

He warned that his team needs "full visibility" into the budget process at the Defense Department "in order to avoid any window of confusion or catch-up that our adversaries may try to exploit." He also said they need "a clear picture of our force posture around the world and of our operations to deter our enemies."

Biden's remarks came after he was briefed by members of his national security and defense teams and advisers, including his nominees for secretary of State, Defense and Homeland Security, as well as his incoming national security adviser. The president-elect said his team found that agencies "critical to our security have incurred enormous damage" during President Donald Trump's time in office.

"Many of them have been hollowed out in personnel, capacity and in morale," he said. "All of it makes it harder for our government to protect the American people, to defend our vital interests in a world where threats are constantly evolving and our adversaries are constantly adapting."

Trump has still refused to concede an election he lost by more than 7 million votes, and his administration did not authorize official cooperation with the Biden transition team until Nov. 23, weeks after the election. Biden and his aides warned at the time that the delay was hampering their ability to craft their own vaccine rollout plan, but have since said cooperation on that and other issues related to COVID-19 has improved.

Last week, however, Biden himself said that the Defense Department "won't even brief us on many things" and suggested because of this, he didn't have a complete understanding of the full scope of the recent cyberhack that breached numerous government systems.

AP
President-elect Joe Biden speaks at The Queen theater, Monday, Dec. 28, 2020, in Wilmington, Del.

Pentagon officials pushed back on Biden's characterization of the disconnect between the Defense Department and the Biden team. Acting Defense Secretary Christopher Miller said in a statement that the department has conducted 164 interviews with over 400 officials, and provided over 5,000 pages of documents, which is "far more than initially requested by Biden's transition team."

Miller also said that his team is continuing to schedule meetings for the remaining weeks of the transition and "answer any and all requests for information in our purview."

Speaking Monday, Biden said they're still gathering information about the extent of the cyberhack, but described the need to "modernize" America's defense to deter future such attacks, "rather than continuing to over-invest in legacy systems designed to address the threats of the past."

Biden also spoke in length about the need to rebuild global alliances, which he said were necessary to combat climate change, address the COVID-19 pandemic and prepare for future epidemics, and confront the growing threat posed by China.

"Right now, there's an enormous vacuum. We're going to have to regain the trust and confidence of a world that has begun to find ways to work around us or without us," he said.

Trump has implemented an "America First" foreign policy that saw the U.S. retreat from longstanding global alliances and treaties. The Trump Administration cut funding from the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, withdrew from the World Health Organization and the Paris Climate Accords.

House approves Trump's $2K checks, sending to GOP-led Senate

WASHINGTON (AP)—The House voted overwhelmingly Monday to increase COVID-19 relief checks to $2,000, meeting President Donald Trump's demand for bigger payments and sending the bill to the GOP-controlled Senate, where the outcome is highly uncertain.

Democrats led passage, 275-134, their majority favoring additional assistance, but dozens of Republicans suddenly joined in approval. While Democrats favored bigger checks, Congress had settled on smaller $600 payments in a compromise over the big year-end relief bill Trump reluctantly signed into law. The president's GOP allies opposed more spending and Trump's push puts them in a difficult spot.

The vote was a stunning turn of events from just days ago, when House Republicans blocked Trump's demands during a Christmas Eve session. After Trump spent days fuming from his private club in Florida, where he is spending the holidays, dozens of Republicans preferred to link with Democrats rather than buck the outgoing president. Senators were set to return to session Tuesday, forced to consider the measure amid similar, stark GOP divisions.

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi declared, "Republicans have a choice: Vote for this legislation or vote to deny the American people the bigger paychecks they need."

The showdown could end up as more symbol than substance. Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., has declined to say publicly how the Senate will handle the bill when Democrats there try to push it forward for a vote on Tuesday.

After the robust House vote, Senate Democratic leader Chuck Schumer warned, "There is no good reason for Senate Republicans to stand in the way."

"There's strong support for these $2,000 emergency checks from every corner of the country," Schumer said in a statement. "Leader McConnell ought to make sure Senate Republicans do not stand in the way of helping to meet the needs of American workers and families who are crying out for help."

The legislative action during the rare holiday week session may do little to change the $2 trillion-plus COVID-19 relief and federal spending package that Trump signed into law Sunday, one of the biggest bills of its kind providing relief for millions of Americans.

That package—$900 billion in COVID-19 aid and $1.4 trillion to fund government agencies—will deliver long-sought cash to businesses and individuals and avert a federal government shutdown that otherwise would have started Tuesday, in the midst of the public health crisis.

But the outcome will define Trump's GOP, putting a spotlight on the Georgia runoff election Jan. 5 where two Republican senators are in the fights of their political lives against Democrats in a pair of races that will determine which party controls the Senate next year.

Bomber to neighbor: The world is 'never going to forget me'

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (AP)—It seemed like a friendly chat between neighbors. Only after a bomb exploded in downtown Nashville on Christmas morning could Rick Laude grasp the sinister meaning behind his neighbor's smiling remark that the city and the rest of the world would never forget him.

Laude told The Associated Press on Monday that he was speechless when he learned that authorities identified his 63-year-old neighbor, Anthony Quinn Warner, as the man suspected of detonating a bomb that killed himself, injured three other people and damaged dozens of buildings.

Laude said he saw Warner standing at his mailbox less than a week before Christmas and pulled over in his car to talk. After asking how Warner's elderly mother was doing, Laude said he casually asked, "Is Santa going to bring you anything good for Christmas?"

Warner smiled and said, "Oh, yeah, Nashville and the world is never going to forget me," Laude recalled.

Laude said he didn't think much of the remark and thought Warner only meant that "something good" was going to happen for him financially.

"Nothing about this guy raised any red flags," Laude said. "He was just quiet."

Laude said Warner sometimes did not respond when he and other neighbors waved to him, but said he did not take it personally. "I knew that he was just a recluse," he said.

As investigators continued to search for a motive, body camera video released late Monday by Nashville police offered more insight to the moments leading up to the explosion and its aftermath.

The recording from Officer Michael Sipos' camera captures officers walking past the RV parked across the street as the recorded warning blares and then helping people evacuate after the thunderous blast off camera. Car alarms and sirens wailed as a police dispatch voice called for all available personnel and people stumbled through downtown streets littered with glass.

Warner left behind clues that suggest he planned the bombing and intended to kill himself, but a clear motive remained elusive.

"We hope to get an answer. Sometimes, it's just not possible," David Rausch, the director of the Tennessee Bureau of Investigation, said Monday in an interview on NBC's "Today" show. "The best way to find motive is to talk to the individual. We will not be able to do that in this case."

As investigators continued to search for a motive, body camera video released late Monday by Nashville police offered more insight to the moments leading up to the explosion and its aftermath.

The recording from Officer Michael Sipos' camera captures officers walking past the RV parked across the street as the recorded warning blares and then helping people evacuate after the thunderous blast off camera. Car alarms and sirens wailed as a voice on the dispatcher calls for all available personnel and a roll call and people stumble through the downtown area littered with glass.

Asia

AMID PANDEMIC

Pacific islands working to offset food shortages

JAKARTA, Indonesia (AP)—Coronavirus infections have barely touched many of the remote islands of the Pacific, but the pandemic's fallout has been enormous, disrupting the supply chain that brings crucial food imports and sending prices soaring as tourism wanes.

With a food crisis looming, many governments have begun community initiatives to help alleviate shortages: extending fishing seasons, expanding indigenous food gathering lessons and bolstering seed distribution programs that allow residents greater self-reliance.

AP

This July 2020 photo provided by Fiji's Ministry of Agriculture shows staff members of the Suva Christian School, Louisa John, left, and her colleague working in their garden in Suva, Fiji.

"We initially started with 5,000 seeds and thought we would finish them in nine months' time. But there was a very big response, and we finished distributing the seeds in one week," said Vinesh Kumar, head of operation for Fiji's Agriculture Ministry.

The project provides residents with vegetable seeds, saplings and basic farming equipment to help them grow their own home gardens.

Fiji resident Elisabeta Waqa said she had contemplated starting a garden before the pandemic, but—with no job, extra time at home and seeds from the ministry and friends—finally took action.

Looking to have "zero financial investment," Waqa collected buckets, crates and other potential planters discarded on the side of the road and in the trash. Soon her yard transformed into containers of green beans, cucumber, cabbage and other produce.

"When I started harvesting about two, three weeks later, that's when I realized: My gosh, this is a hobby people have had for so long. I thought about just how much money I could save my doing this," Waqa said.

Geographically isolated with limited arable land and increased urbanization, many of the Pacific island countries and territories have seen their populations shift from traditional agriculture-based work to tourism. The trend has created an increased reliance on imported food such as corned beef, noodles and other highly processed foods instead of the traditional diet of locally grown items like nutrient-rich yams and taro.

Eriko Hibi, director of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations Liaison Office in Japan, called the shift a "triple burden" of health issues: undernutrition, micronutrient deficiencies and obesity.

When the pandemic hit, nearly all the countries in the region closed their borders. Shipping supply chains—including fertilizer for farms and food—were disrupted, causing prices to rise. In Suva, Fiji, the cost of some fresh fruits and vegetables rose by up to 75% during the first weeks.

At same time, tourism—which Hibi said accounts for up to 70% of some countries' gross domestic product—came to a halt, leaving thousands unemployed with decreased access to food.

"It's not just about the availability of the prices in the market but also the purchasing power of the consumers, which has gone down," Hibi said.

In Tuvalu, the government held workshops teaching youth indigenous food production methods such as taro planting and sap collection from coconut trees. In Fiji, the government extended fishing season of coral trout and grouper that could be sold for income or used as food. Numerous governments encouraged residents to move back to rural areas that had stronger independent food resources.

Tevita Ratucadre and his wife moved back to a rural village in Fiji to save on rent and food costs after being laid off from the hotel where they worked because of COVID-19.

In the city, "you have to buy everything with money, even if you have to put food on the table," Ratucadre said. "In the village you can grow your own things."

Having watched his parents farm when he was a child, Ratucadre said he was able to remember how to plant and grow cassava stems from a neighbor. He now grows enough food for his family, he said.

"When I used to work, I used to buy whatever I wanted to eat when I'd go to the supermarket," he said. "Now I have to plant and eat whatever I've planted."

Mervyn Piesse, a research manager at Australian-based research institute Future Directions International, said it was too early to know what the potential health benefits could be but regional diets might shift away from imports to more fresh food, even after the pandemic.

"There is, I think, a movement in parts of the Pacific for people to actually start thinking about, 'If we can grow food ourselves during a global pandemic, why can't we do the same thing at normal times?'" Piesse said.

Waqa said she has already made up her mind—though she's begun working again, she's taught her older children how to take care of the garden and harvest produce while she's gone.

"Now I save money on food, know where my food is coming from and just feel more secure about having food," she said. "I don't want to go back to the way things were before."

World

Iran says Pfizer vaccine batch expected from US benefactors

TEHRAN, Iran (AP)—An unidentified group of U.S.-based philanthropists plans to send 150,000 doses of the Pfizer vaccine to Iran in the coming weeks, Iranian media reported Monday, in a step that could bring the hardest-hit country in the Middle East closer to inoculating its citizens against the coronavirus.

Details remained scarce in the report by semiofficial Tasnim news agency. It quoted the chief of the country's Red Crescent Society as saying he expects the vaccine created by American drug maker Pfizer and its German partner BioNTech to be imported by Jan. 19 "based on coordination with a group of benefactors in the U.S."

Iran has struggled to stem the worst virus outbreak in the Middle East, which has infected over 1.2 million people and killed nearly 55,000.

Karim Hemmati, the Red Crescent director, said his organization plans to receive an additional 1 million vaccine doses, which on Sunday the semiofficial Khabaronline.it news website reported would come from China. The vaccines will be offered to citizens free of charge, Hemmati said.

Officials have said previously that importing the Pfizer vaccine, which must be shipped and stored at minus 70 degrees Celsius (minus 94 degrees Fahrenheit), poses major logistical challenges for Iran.

Iran has signed up for COVAX, an international program designed to distribute coronavirus vaccines to participating countries regardless of their wealth. It's run in part by Gavi, The Vaccine Alliance. which says the U.S. Treasury's Office of Foreign Asset Control has already issued a license for Iran to take part. The U.S. Treasury has not reacted to Iran's participation.

The chief of Iran's central bank, Abdolnasser Hemmati, told state TV last week that Iran had received approval to transfer a $244 million payment through an unnamed bank in a "third country" to obtain nearly 17 million doses of vaccines from COVAX. He did not provide further details, such as which vaccine or how the money would be sent. Under COVAX rules, Iran could at a maximum order enough doses to vaccinate half of its 82 million people.

President Hassan Rouhani said Saturday that Iran would refuse to make the COVAX payment through U.S. financial institutions for fear of confiscation. Since the start of the pandemic, political figures in Iran have pushed anti-American conspiracy theories about the spread of the virus and vaccine production, dismissing the prospect of U.S. assistance.

"Who trusts you? Wherever you found our money you stole it," Rouhani said.

He added that Iran would not participate in human trials of foreign-made vaccines, vowing to provide the country with imported and locally produced vaccines.

Iran's homemade vaccine is due to enter a Phase 1 clinical trial soon, enrolling 54 volunteers across the country to receive two shots, state-run IRNA news agency reported. Iran's vaccine research has gained urgency as officials allege that heavy American sanctions will hamper the Islamic Republic's mass inoculation efforts.

Russia's prison service tells Navalny to appear or face jail

MOSCOW (AP)—Russia's federal penitentiary service on Monday gave top Kremlin critic Alexei Navalny one day to report to its office or face imprisonment, if he comes back to Russia after the deadline.

Navalny is convalescing in Germany after his August poisoning with a nerve agent, which he has blamed on the Kremlin. Russian authorities have denied their involvement.

The Federal Penitentiary Service issued a statement Monday saying that an article by doctors from Berlin's Charite hospital and published in medical journal The Lancet indicated that Navalny has fully recuperated.

The prison service demanded that Navalny report to its office in line with the terms of a 3 1/2-year suspended sentence he received for a 2014 conviction. If he misses the deadline, he could be imprisoned, the statement said.

Navalny's lawyer, Vadim Kobzev, tweeted that the agency told the politician to show up at its office on Tuesday morning. Navalny, who previously said that he planned to return to Russia once he fully recovered, scoffed at the demand, saying that the Federal Penitentiary Service's reference to the article in The Lancet amounted to the government accepting he was poisoned.

"That means that the state has officially recognized the poisoning," he tweeted. "And where is the criminal case then?"

Navalny fell into a coma while aboard a domestic flight from Siberia to Moscow on Aug. 20. The plane made an emergency landing, and he was transferred from a hospital in Siberia to the Berlin hospital two days later. Labs in Germany, France and Sweden, and tests by the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, established that he was exposed to a Soviet-era Novichok nerve agent.

Russian authorities have insisted that doctors who treated Navalny in Siberia before he was airlifted to Germany found no trace of poison and have challenged German officials to provide proof of his poisoning. They refused to open a full-fledged criminal inquiry, citing the lack of evidence that Navalny was poisoned.

The European Union imposed sanctions on six Russian officials and a state research institute after tests by the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons concluded that Navalny had been exposed to Novichok. Russia has hit back with its own sanctions against EU officials.

Last week, Navalny released the recording of a phone call he said he made to a man he described as an alleged member of a group of officers of the Federal Security Service, or FSB, who purportedly poisoned him in August and then tried to cover it up.

Navalny made the call hours before the investigative group Bellingcat released a report alleging that FSB operatives with specialized training in chemical weapons followed him for years and were in close vicinity when he was poisoned.

Good Housekeeping

Welcome Mat: Ideas for your tree after Christmas

By MAUREEN FEIGHAN
THE DETROIT NEWS

Ideas for your real tree after Christmas

If you're interested in repurposing your tree once the holiday is over, you can, Oakland County officials say. They've teamed up with the Arbor Day Foundation for some suggestions that go beyond putting your real tree in the garbage:

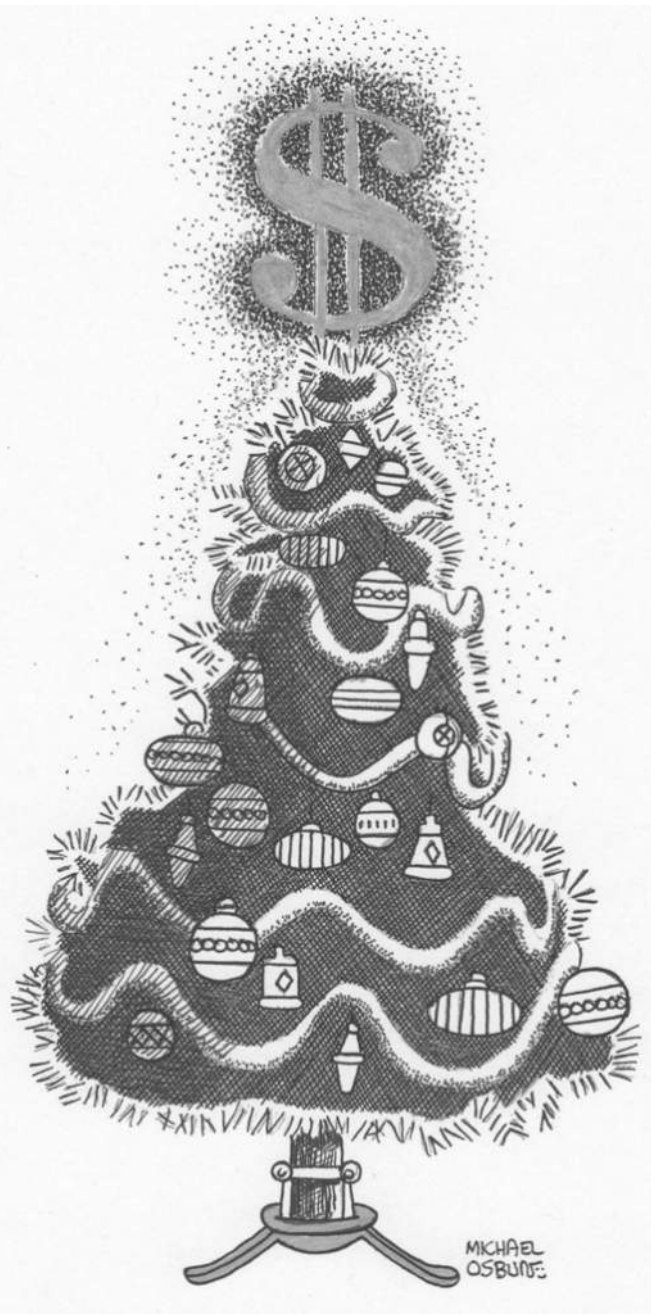
■ Firewood: Because they are sap-heavy trees, evergreens tend to burn hot and fast, making them ideal for bonfires. Trees should be dried out for a few months before burning.

■ Mulch: Whether it's with woodchips or needles, mulch is a great way to keep your yard trees healthy and moist during the cold season. Pine needles contain nutrients that enhance the PH of soil.

■ Ashes: Ashes from burned Christmas trees contain potassium and lime, which when spread in the garden help plants to thrive.

■ Natural insulation: Cutting off the branches and laying them in a garden bed will protect plants from winter freezes and spring thaws.

■ Fresheners: Green pine needles can be stored in paper bags or sachets to use as fresheners around the house.



Glidden names Aqua Fiesta 'Accent' Color of the Year

Every year, paint retailers pinpoint an "it" color of the new year but not Glidden by PPG. The paint retailer admits it went "rogue" this past fall by not naming a Color of the Year this year of last year. Instead, it's taking a different approaching this year to potentially help DIY-ers. Glidden has naming Aqua Fiesta, a turquoise hue, its Accent Color of the Year. Aqua Fiesta is a "cheerful and fresh aquamarine color that looks great in a bedroom, bath, living room or kitchen," announced the retailer. Last year, Glidden didn't name a Color of the Year and it didn't again for 2021, admitting it went "rogue." Glidden said it picked an accent color to help DIY-ers or those who may be procrastinating with home design projects. For a bedroom, living room or kitchen, Glidden suggests pairing with Whirlwind, a light gray it unveiled last year. If you use Aqua Fiesta in a bedroom, Glidden suggests adding in cream-colored bedding and white, fluffy pillows to complete the look.

Ellen Degeneres launches new line of bath vanities, cabinets

Ellen Degeneres already has a successful line of furniture and home decor—and, of course, a talk show—but now she's expanding into the bathroom. Earlier this month, the beloved comedian announced the launch of ED Ellen Degeneres Bath, a line of bath vanities, cabinets and mirrors. The new line, described as "transitional elegance," includes several different styles—pictured is the Riven design—all of which can be configured in different ways, feature dovetail drawers and other details. "There are a lot of premium details I love," said Degeneres in a video on the line's website. She said her line will eventually expand to include rugs, lighting and flooring. For details on ED Ellen Degeneres Bath, go to bath.edbyellen.com.

To do this week: Give yourself a good massage. Here's how.

On the to-do list this week: It's the holidays. It's snowy. Times are stressful. We have some ways to help this week. First, we've got some self-massage techniques that, let's face it, we could all use right now. We also have a roundup of excellent gifts to buy someone you appreciate (even if that person is yourself). And while you're in a giving mood, we've got an easy way to give back.

And remember: We've collected our best articles with our best Philly tips. They're in one place here.

Stay healthy, stay safe, and, as much as possible, it's still a good idea to stay home.

■ thingstodo@inquirer.com

■ I was exposed to COVID-19. Does everyone in my house have to quarantine? by Grace Dickinson

■ Can my employer require that I get the vaccine? by Juliana Feliciano Reyes

■ When I get the vaccine, will I still have to wear a mask? by Grace Dickinson

■ Ask us a question through Curious Philly: inquirer.com/askus

Here is one highlight from our weekly events calendar:

■ New Year's Resolution Wall at the Kimmel Center (Seasonal / virtual / kid-friendly / free) You can post your 2021 New Year's resolutions on social media, tagged with #KimmelResolutions2021 and they'll be collected and shared by the Kimmel on multiple platforms, including the huge digital sign outside of the theater. (Free, through Jan. 14, kimmelcenter.org, add to calendar)

Find more of this week's safe kid-friendly, outdoor and arts events.

Need a massage? Yeah, we're right there with ya. But while you can get a professional massage, it may not be a great idea right now. So Grace Dickinson found some RMT-approved ways you can DIY it if you have a collection of rocks in your back where your muscles are supposed to be. There are several exercises—with videos—in Grace's full piece, but here's one to help you deal with neck tension:

To release tension in the neck

1. Place your left hand on the back of your neck on the right side. Starting where your skull meets your neck, begin directing pressure toward the front of your neck as you glide your hand down to where the muscle spans out down toward your shoulder.

2. Then, gently or firmly pressing with your fingertips, feel the muscles next to your spine, and use your fingertips to roll the muscles back and forth. You're pulling the muscle toward your vertebra, and then away.

3. You can also press one spot that feels tender, and make very slow, up-and-down movements with your head, like you're saying "no." Notice how tiny changes to the angle of your chin affects the sensation. When you find a position that brings a release of pain, pause and take three deep breaths. Imagine a softening with each exhale.

4. Switch sides, and repeat.

(The Philadelphia Inquirer)

Covid-19 cooking: We tried to make Dinosaur-inspired ribs at home

By KATRINA TULLOCH
SYRACUSE.COM

During the Covid-19 shutdown, we've been recreating some of our favorite Syracuse restaurant dishes at home, from Alto Cinco's burritos to Apizza Regionale's Calabrian pizza.

This month, we tackled smoked ribs, macaroni & cheese and tomato cucumber salad inspired by Syracuse's own Dinosaur Bar-B-Que. When it's cold in Syracuse, there's nothing we love more than a stick-to-your-ribs barbecue feast.

There are plenty of great recipes for smoked ribs online. This one promises a rack similar to the one you'd find at Dinosaur Bar-B-Que, but after a few smoker experiments, we found we liked our ribs to taste a bit sweeter.

In the end, we used a recipe for 3-2-1 ribs to get a perfect balance of sweet and savory meat that falls off the bone. This method smokes the ribs at 200 degrees for three hours, wraps it with liquid for two hours at 225 degrees, and adds a layer of sauce to form a bark for the final hour. (Recipe here.)

This recipe can be made in the oven, on the grill, or in a smoker. We used a Master-Built cabinet smoker for the job and used applewood chips to get a lovely fruity flavor on our rack. See the video above for a step-by-step.

Prep your ribs by removing the membrane from the back of the rack with a knife or your fingers. This thin piece of tissue doesn't soften when it's cooked, so if your skip this step, your ribs may turn out chewy.

Then smother the whole rack with yellow mustard and cover it with a simple rub. You can buy one pre-made at the store or make your own with your favorite spices. For ours, we used one part paprika, kosher salt, pepper, brown sugar, cumin, garlic powder, onion powder, cayenne pepper and ground mustard.

For the first three hours in the smoker (200 degrees), we set and left our ribs bone-side down. For the next two hours we wrapped them, bone-side up, in a foil pouch with four pats of butter, brown sugar and apple juice. Pour the juice directly into the "canoe" shape of the ribs. It'll penetrate the meat during the smoke and make it unbelievably tender.

Smoker tip: Use heavy aluminum foil when you wrap the ribs up and crimp the top tightly to seal. That'll bring the ribs up to temperature evenly, and will help to avoid leaks. Watch out for the hot steam when you unwrap (use gloves!) and discard the apple-sugar-butter mixture after the 2-hour smoke time.

For the final hour, remove the foil, slather the ribs in your favorite barbecue sauce and return them to the smoker bone-side down at 225 degrees. When you take the rack out, your ribs are ready to eat and should rip cleanly apart. No need for a knife to cut them.

This ribs recipe takes six hours to complete, but it's well worth the time. While you're letting your ribs cook or smoke, you can prepare your sides.

The under-appreciated tomato cucumber salad adds a fresh, tangy zing to this otherwise heavy meal. This recipe from Tops tasted authentic and delicious, with three chopped ripe tomatoes, two chopped cucumbers and half a sliced red onion. Toss it with extra virgin olive oil (1/2 cup), red wine vinegar (1/2 cup) and four cloves of minced garlic. Add salt, black pepper, sugar and oregano to taste.

Dinosaur Bar-B-Que is also famous for its hearty mac and cheese (recipe here). It uses four different kinds of cheese and add loads of flavors with white vinegar, mustard and tabasco sauce. You don't need an immersion blender if you know how to make a simple roux. Just add your milk and cheese slowly and stir constantly. Feel free to add breadcrumbs on top or not. We like crumbs for a slight crunch.

If you don't want to make a mess in the kitchen, you can still get the real thing.

Dinosaur Bar-B-Que is in the Orange Zone and remains open for takeout and delivery. You can find the menu at dinosaurbarbque.com/syracuse and call 315-476-4937 to order. It's not the same as ripping apart their signature ribs in the Dino Boneyard, but hey, it's the little things.

The pandemic has been difficult for all of us. But one small ray of light during the shutdown is the gift of time. Home cooks everywhere can perfect a few new recipes during this time, whether it's a Rochester garbage plate or a giant frittata from Mother's Cupboard.

Cheers to all the mediocre cooks out there. We hope you stay healthy and safe this winter.

Life & Style

Slow down? No, says Ryan Seacrest

NEW YORK (AP)—Most folks have slowed down in the past nine months but Ryan Seacrest says he's been juggling more than usual during the pandemic.

His regular TV and radio gigs as a co-host on " Live with Kelly and Ryan " and his syndicated " On Air with Ryan Seacrest " radio show continue, despite lockdown. On weekends there were tapings for what he calls "the singing show" (otherwise known as ABC's " American Idol. ")

"There were also a lot of requests to do extra specials and things for our partners (such as hosting the successful "Disney Family Sing Along" programs) because everyone was going through a tough time. We leaned into doing as much as we could," said Seacrest, 46, in an interview from the radio studio he built in the basement of the "Live" set.

Seacrest

His commute from the morning talk show to radio gig is one minute but Seacrest is still largely bi-coastal and splits his time between New York and Los Angeles.

This week he will return to New York's Times Square to once again front "Dick Clark New Year's Rockin' Eve." Seacrest will count down to 2021 with the help of actors Lucy Hale and Billy Porter. Ciara will cohost from Los Angeles. Jennifer Lopez is also scheduled to perform from New York. The broadcast is closed to the public due to the pandemic but a select group of front line workers have been invited to watch.

"It may feel a little different on the ground, but I think on the air it's still going to have that celebratory component to it," said Seacrest. "Most of us can't go anywhere, so we're going to really try to put on a good show."

He's so comfortable with hosting that Seacrest gets a thrill out of the curveballs that can pop up. He and Ripa purposely walk onto the "Live" set seconds before show time because, he says, "there's something fun about that."

He also admits he's hoped for bad weather during past New Year's Eve broadcasts because it would pose a challenge and "gives you something to talk about."

Seacrest doesn't get nervous before going on air or when he's about to speak to the masses, but says big Zoom meetings leave him tongue-tied.

"It's all of the Zooms that I have to do with 50 people. I can see them all looking and I feel pressured to say something magical and I don't deliver. I clear my throat. I look at my notes, I get so anxious."

Of all his work, Seacrest says the most important is his non-profit Ryan Seacrest Foundation, which is run by his parents and sister. They've opened 11 broadcast studios and counting, named Seacrest Studios, in children's hospitals throughout the country to give the kids a positive distraction. The studios give young patients a taste of producing a radio or television show, with the occasional celebrity guest.

Lori Loughlin released after prison term in college scam

By ALANNA DURKIN RICHER
ASSOCIATED PRESS

"Full House" actor Lori Loughlin was released from prison Monday after spending two months behind bars for paying half a million dollars in bribes to get her two daughters into college.

Loughlin was released from the federal lockup in Dublin, California, where she had been serving her sentence for her role in the college admissions bribery scheme, the federal Bureau of Prisons said. Her husband, fashion designer Mossimo Giannulli, is serving his five-month sentence at a prison in Lompoc near Santa Barbara, California.

Giannulli is scheduled to be released on April 17, the Bureau of Prisons says. Prosecutors said Giannulli deserved a tougher sentence because he was "the more active participant in the scheme."

Loughlin

Loughlin and Giannulli were among the highest-profile defendants charged in the scheme, which revealed the lengths to which some wealthy parents will go to get their children into elite universities. Authorities said parents funneled bribes through a fake charity run by an admissions consultant to get their kids into top schools with fake athletic credentials or rigged test scores.

The famous couple admitted in May to paying $500,000 to get their two daughters into the University of Southern California as crew recruits even though neither girl was a rower. Their guilty plea was a stunning reversal for the couple, whose lawyers had insisted for a year were innocent and accused investigators of fabricating evidence against them.

The only public comments either Loughlin or Giannulli made about the case since their arrest last year came at their sentencing hearings in August. Loughlin, who gained fame for her role as the wholesome Aunt Becky in the sitcom "Full House," told the judge her actions "helped exacerbate existing inequalities in society" and pledged to do everything in her power to use her experience as a "catalyst to do good."

Their younger daughter, social media influencer Olivia Jade, made her first public remarks about the scandal this month on the series "Red Table Talk." Olivia Jade said she doesn't want or deserve pity.

"We messed up. I just want a second chance to be like, 'I recognize I messed up.' And for so long I wasn't able to talk about this because of the legalities behind it," she said.

Loughlin and Giannulli were both initially supposed to report to prison on Nov. 19, but prosecutors and defense attorneys agreed Loughlin could start her sentence on Oct. 30. Loughlin also agreed that she would not seek early release on coronavirus-related grounds, prosecutors said.

Of the nearly 60 parents, coaches and others charged in the case, about a dozen are still fighting the allegations. The sentences for the parents who have pleaded so far in the case range from a couple weeks to nine months. Actor Felicity Huffman served nearly two weeks in prison last year for paying an admissions consultant $15,000 to have a proctor correct her daughter's SAT answers.

Queen Elizabeth pays tribute to 'kindness of strangers'

LONDON (AP)—One of the traditional fixtures of any Christmas Day is to see Queen Elizabeth II and her family go to church. Not this year. The coronavirus pandemic has made sure of that.

However, the queen, 94, did fulfill what is considered her most cherished Christmas Day duty. Addressing the nation—as well as the Commonwealth—on television Friday.

The queen, who has spent much of the year isolating at Windsor Castle with her 99-year-old husband Prince Philip, delivered a heartfelt message of hope in her Christmas address, praising the "indomitable spirit" of those who have risen "magnificently" to the challenges of the pandemic.

Queen Elizabeth

Seated behind a desk where the only family photo on show was a private portrait of Philip, the queen expressed sympathy for the ordeal of the past few months while also laying out hope of a return to normality.

"We continue to be inspired by the kindness of strangers and draw comfort that—even on the darkest nights—there is hope in the new dawn," she said.

The queen wrote her address, as she does every year, and her words are likely to have added poignancy given the upheaval many families have experienced during the pandemic, particularly in the U.K., which has an official coronavirus-related death toll of just over 70,000, Europe's second-highest behind Italy.

It was recorded before the British government decided last weekend to ditch its plans for a five-day easing of coronavirus restrictions around Christmastime. In many parts of the U.K., including London, people were being urged to stay at home and not meet others because of a new variant of the virus that is said to spread far easier.

"Of course, for many, this time of year will be tinged with sadness: some mourning the loss of those dear to them, and others missing friends and family members distanced for safety, when all they'd really want for Christmas is a simple hug or a squeeze of the hand," she said. "If you are among them, you are not alone, and let me assure you of my thoughts and prayers."

Attentions from married man play with woman' emotions

DEAR ABBY
By ABIGAIL VAN BUREN
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Contact Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

DEAR ABBY: I'm someone who doesn't get noticed often by the opposite sex. So when I do receive attention, it's a very nice feeling. The problem is, I am getting that attention from a man who is married.

In the beginning, I didn't know he was married. He doesn't wear a ring, and he never mentioned a wife until one day while we were chatting, he let it slip. I don't think he meant for it to happen.

When someone is married, I back off. But for some reason, I'm not backing away from this. I'm starting to have feelings for him. I'm leaving it up to him, though. If he flirts, I'll flirt back. When he comes on strong one day, the next day he feels guilty and backs off, but then we pick up right where we left off.

I'm not trying to paint him as the bad guy; he's honestly a really good guy -- in my opinion, anyway. I know it's wrong, and he hasn't promised anything. We haven't had any physical contact other than the daily interaction. But it's messing with my emotions. I don't want to feel anything for him, but I can't help it. Help!

DAZED & CONFUSED

DEAR DAZED & CONFUSED: You may not want to feel anything for this married man, but you do. And because you "don't get noticed much by the opposite sex," the attention you're receiving is like water on a parched flower. (Funny how they always seem to pick the vulnerable ones.)

You may not have had physical contact with him (yet), but you are playing with fire. This is no longer an "innocent" flirtation. Someone will get hurt if it continues, and that person is likely to be you. Keep in mind that "good guys" don't behave the way he does, and this wouldn't have happened if he had been honest with you about his marital status.

DEAR ABBY: When I came out as gay, my parents rejected me. It made my early 20s the most challenging period of my life. I have tried to forgive them and move on, but they refuse to acknowledge the trauma they caused.

I was upset all over again last year when they felt sorry for a young adult and let him move in with them. Mom never shuts up about how we should feel sorry for those less fortunate. They act like I have always been blessed and refuse to acknowledge any of the pain or bad things that have happened in my life.

How should I react to this? I'm on a good path now, no thanks to them, and my life has never been better. But I don't know if I can ever forgive them for being so helpful to a stranger and not their son. Am I wrong to ask where my sympathy was?

SEEKING VALIDATION IN TEXAS

DEAR SEEKING: If you plan to hold a mirror up to your knee-jerk homophobic parents and expect honest introspection from them, I think you'll be wasting your time. It's possible that they think their compassion for the stranger makes up for the way they treated you. Whether you can forgive them for it depends solely upon you.

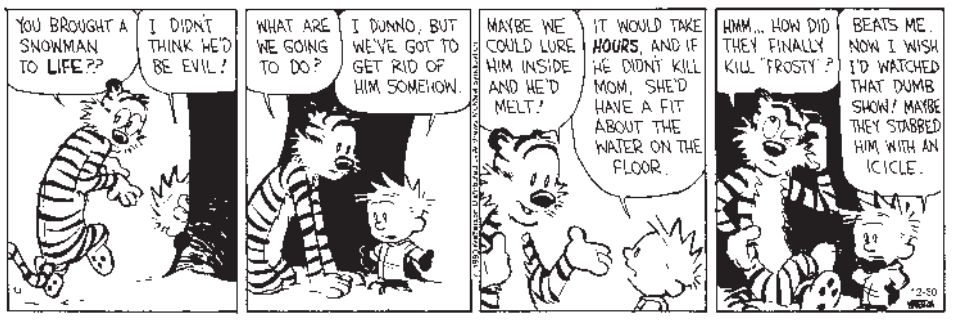
You are now on a constructive and rewarding path. The validation you are seeking can be found there. Your ability to forgive may come once you have distanced yourself enough that the pain they caused is less acute. I have often advised that when parents are toxic, it's important to build "families of choice," and I sincerely hope that is what you are doing and will continue to do.

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Contact Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

Pastimes

Calvin and Hobbes

By Bill Waterson

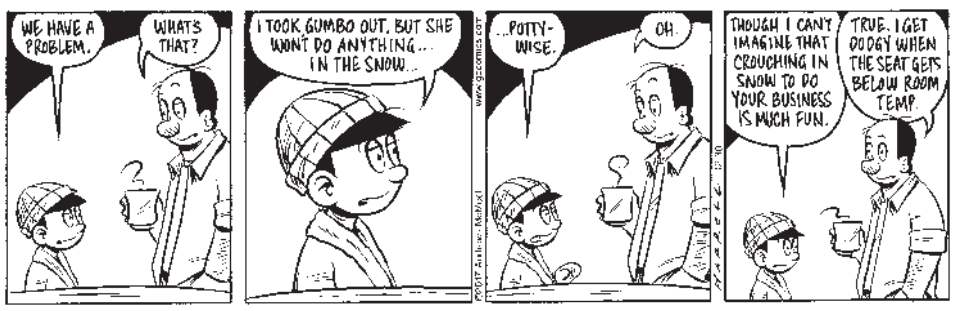

YOU BROUGHT A SNOWMAN TO LIFE??
I DIDN'T THINK HE'D BE EVIL!
WHAT ARE WE GOING TO DO?
I DUNNO, BUT WE'VE GOT TO GET RID OF HIM SOMEHOW.
MAYBE WE COULD LURE HIM INSIDE AND HE'D MELT!
IT WOULD TAKE HOURS, AND IF HE DIDN'T KILL MOM, SHE'D HAVE A FIT ABOUT THE WATER ON THE FLOOR.
HMM... HOW DID THEY FINALLY KILL 'FROSTY'?
BEATS ME. NOW I WISH I'D WATCHED THAT DUMB SHOW! MAYBE THEY STABBED HIM WITH AN ICICLE.

Garfield®

By Jim Davis

Adam@home

By Bryan Basset


WE HAVE A PROBLEM.
WHAT'S THAT?
I TOOK GUMBO OUT, BUT SHE WON'T DO ANYTHING... IN THE SNOW...
...POTTY-WISE.
OH.
THOUGH I CAN'T IMAGINE THAT CROUCHING IN SNOW TO DO YOUR BUSINESS IS MUCH FUN.
TRUE. I GET ODDLY WHEN THE SEAT GETS BELOW ROOM TEMP.

The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy

YEAH, BOSS? IT'S ENO. I'M CALLING IN SICK TODAY.
YOU WANT A SIGNED NOTE FROM MY DOCTOR? OKAY, FINE!
YOU'RE GOING TO VERIFY THE SIGNATURE? NEVER MIND. I FEEL BETTER NOW.

CROSSWORD

By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS

1 In shape
4 High school subj.
7 California city
8 Razor sharpener
10 Ersatz chocolate
11 Mountain crests
13 Setting for betting
16 Doctrine
17 Hosiery shade
18 Entreat
19 Kvetch
20 Rival rival
21 Pat's "Wheel of Fortune" colleague
23 Jaunty chapeau
25 Knitter's need
26 Sets (down)
27 — -de-France
28 Backbone
30 Satisfied sigh
33 Game room fixture
36 Fancy fabric
37 Dodge
38 Ganges garments
39 Mediocre
40 Profit
41 Golf peg

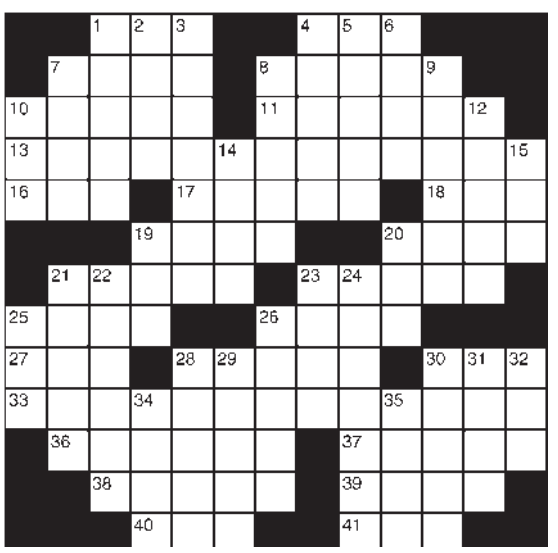
DOWN

1 Public meeting
2 "American —"
3 Lhasa native
4 Throat affliction
5 El Greco's birthplace
6 Tiny bit
7 Cambodia neighbor
8 Stopped lying?
9 Small stone
10 Dernier —
12 Nodded off
14 Skater Lipinski
15 Swelled head
19 Wolf Blitzer's channel
20 "— Poetica"
21 Legitimate
22 Sports venues
23 Backfire sound
24 Optometrist's exam
25 Shrill bark
26 Chain components
28 Extra
29 Suggest
30 Treat badly
31 Designer Gucci
32 Haw preceder
34 FBI guy
35 Lotion additive

Solution time: 23 mins.

S	N	O	B		N	A	P		D	A	F	T
L	A	V	A		O	L	E		O	G	L	E
O	D	E	S		S	I	H	A	W	H	A	I
G	A	I	I	I	F	O		D		A	N	F
			C	A	D		C	A	T			
B	E	A	S	T		S	K	Y	H	I	G	H
A	H	P			H	E	S			R	I	O
S	A	T	H	O	M	E		B	L	A	S	E
			C	A	S		P	I	F			
A	G	E	N	T		B	O	O	S	T	E	R
S	A	M	E	H	E	R	E		S	E	L	A
A	L	I	S		K	I	I		O	L	I	N
P	A	R	T		E	M	S		N	E	S	T

Yesterday's answer 12-30



STUMPED? For answers to today's crossword, call **1-900-226-5955!** 99¢ per minute, touch-tone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Eliza Dushku, 40; Tyrese Gibson, 42; Laila Ali, 43; Meredith Vieira, 67.

Happy Birthday: Gather everything you've experienced and put a new twist on how you use the knowledge you've gained to enrich your life. Embrace change with open arms, renewed enthusiasm and without carrying any grudges that might deter you from recognizing your full potential. Rejoice in what you have and know, and continue your life journey with renewed optimism. Your numbers are 9, 15, 18, 27, 38, 41, 46.

ARIES *(March 21-April 19):* Don't rock the boat. Get along, keep the peace and tidy up loose ends. Concentrate on what's important to you, and nurture meaningful relationships. Honesty regarding joint finances and ventures will help bring you closer to your goal. ✪✪

TAURUS *(April 20-May 20):* You'll learn something valuable if you observe what others are experiencing. Make a change that will help you avoid getting caught in an expensive tax implication. Leave nothing to chance, and you will make a worthwhile gain. ✪✪✪✪

GEMINI *(May 21-June 20):* Sort through the pros and cons of an offer before you make a decision. When in doubt, ask questions and make adjustments. A last-minute change someone makes will turn into a learning experience for you. Have alternatives ready. ✪✪✪

CANCER *(June 21-July 22):* Don't make a financial decision if you have doubts. Listen to an offer and mull over what's in it for you. Dissatisfaction breeds contempt, so make your demands clear. Honesty and innovation will help you persuade others to see things your way. ✪✪✪

LEO *(July 23-Aug. 22):* Plan how you will bring in the new year with health in mind. Taking a risk will put you in jeopardy or lead to fines. Keep your plans simple, doable and only for those within your immediate circle. ✪✪✪

VIRGO *(Aug. 23-Sept. 22):* Gather and assess information. What you discover will give you a better idea of what's possible. Listen to a passionate plea, but don't buy into something that may put you or someone you love in jeopardy. Abide by the rules. ✪✪✪✪

LIBRA *(Sept. 23-Oct. 22):* Show a little optimism, offer suggestions and do your part to ensure everything runs smoothly. Changes at home or work will set off emotions. Don't make a hasty decision or response. Spend more time on self-improvement, not trying to change others. ✪✪

SCORPIO *(Oct. 23-Nov. 21):* Reach out to friends and relatives and catch up on what's happening. Inside information regarding a trend that can help you get ahead will come your way. Don't invest in someone else. Take the initiative to do your own thing. ✪✪✪✪✪

SAGITTARIUS *(Nov. 22-Dec. 21):* Keep your money, possessions and home safe and sound. Refuse to let anyone disrupt your plans or talk you into something that isn't worthwhile. Put more energy into fitness and nutrition. Romance is favored. ✪✪✪

EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

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CAPRICORN *(Dec. 22-Jan. 19):* Make adjustments at home that will cater to your dreams, hopes and wishes. Engage in changes that will encourage you to look great and to perform flawlessly. Refuse to let the past bring you down. Stay focused and strive for perfection. ✪✪✪

AQUARIUS *(Jan. 20-Feb. 18):* Make a move for the right reason, not because you are bored or following someone's lead. Make decisions based on what's best for you. Step into the limelight, voice your opinion and follow through with what makes you happy. ✪✪✪

PISCES *(Feb. 19-March 20):* Make unique changes at home that will accommodate something you want to pursue. Check and see who is excited about your plans and eager to pitch in and help. Planning a virtual gathering will lead to interesting conversations and possibilities. ✪✪✪✪✪

Birthday Baby: You are forceful, optimistic and innovative. You are sensitive and informative.

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SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku *By Dave Green*

3	8	6	4	2	7	9	
9						1	
					4		
				9			
	6	8	1	4	3		
		2					
	7						
2						8	
5	4	7	6	1	2	3	

Difficulty Level ★★★ 12/30

Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Last Friday's Answer

8	4	3	1	2	9	5	7	6
2	9	5	7	3	6	4	1	8
7	1	6	5	8	4	3	9	2
3	5	4	6	9	8	1	2	7
6	8	7	2	4	1	9	5	3
9	2	1	3	5	7	8	6	4
1	3	9	4	7	2	6	8	5
4	7	8	9	6	5	2	3	1
5	6	2	8	1	3	7	4	9

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WONDERWORD®

By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally and even backward. Find them, circle each letter of the word and strike it off the list. The leftover letters spell the **WONDERWORD.**

ROOM AIR PURIFIERS **Solution: 9 letters**

L	B	N	O	B	R	A	C	B	P	E	E	L	S	I
E	L	H	A	N	E	O	D	O	R	S	I	O	N	S
V	U	E	E	L	T	L	U	F	S	E	S	H	A	P
O	E	L	W	P	L	H	U	T	I	N	A	E	F	O
I	A	N	M	Y	A	E	I	K	A	L	T	T	Z	L
T	I	A	T	U	E	N	R	E	E	A	T	O	H	L
C	R	S	S	I	U	N	L	G	R	L	N	E	U	E
H	W	T	B	N	L	C	O	E	Y	E	O	N	R	N
A	I	H	P	R	O	A	A	H	A	R	G	M	R	S
N	N	M	E	W	O	S	T	V	Ⓓ	S	S	E	E	E
G	I	A	A	A	Q	S	Y	E	Ⓤ	T	M	S	D	V
E	X	Y	T	U	T	T	B	D	Ⓢ	I	A	I	N	O
Z	N	G	I	S	E	D	O	A	Ⓣ	G	C	L	A	M
I	D	E	T	C	E	L	L	O	C	O	S	T	D	E
S	T	E	S	S	E	R	O	P	S	M	O	K	E	R

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Absorbs, Aerate, AHU, Alen, Allergy, Alter, Asthma, Austin, Blueair, Breathe, Carbon, Change, Cleans, Collected, Cost, Coway, Dander, Design, Dust, Dyson, Fans, Filters, Gases, Heat, HEPA, Honeywell, Inhale, Ions, Lasts, Levoit, Lungs, Molekule, Odors, Ozone, Pollen, Quiet, Removes, Size, Sleep, Smoke, Soot, Spores, Timer, Units, Vacuum, Ventilate, Winix

Yesterday's Answer: Brain Teasers

Treasuries 24 through 42 can be purchased online at www.WonderWordBooks.com.

Lillard, Trent lift Blazers past Lakers

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Damian Lillard scored 21 of his 31 points in the second half, and CJ McCollum had 20 points and 11 assists in the Portland Trail Blazers' 115-107 victory over the Los Angeles Lakers on Monday night.

Gary Trent Jr. matched his career high with seven 3-pointers while scoring 28 points in the Blazers' second straight win over the Lakers at Staples Center.

LeBron James had 29 points, nine rebounds and six assists for the NBA champions, who dropped to 2-2 on their season-opening homestand. Dennis Schröder added 24 points, but the Lakers' streak of 59 straight victories when taking a lead into the fourth quarter was snapped.

Anthony Davis had 13 points and 10 rebounds in a tentative return from a one-game absence due to a bruised calf.

Trent took advantage of Carmelo Anthony's absence for more extensive playing time, and went 10 of 14 from the field while finishing two points off his career high.

Los Angeles kept it close with strong games from James and Schröder, who clearly relishes his matchups with Lillard, but their teammates largely struggled on the second night of a back-to-back.

The Lakers made a 15-0 run early in the second half and took a one-point lead into the fourth, but Lillard and McCollum traded big shots down the stretch. Portland finished on a 12-6 spurt.

AP

Portland Trail Blazers forward Derrick Jones Jr. (55) blocks a shot by Los Angeles Lakers forward LeBron James (23) during the third quarter of an NBA game Monday, Dec. 28, 2020, in Los Angeles.

Nuggets 124, Rockets 111

Nikola Jokic had 19 points, 18 assists and 12 rebounds for the 42nd triple-double of his career, and Denver beat shorthanded Houston for its first win of the season.

Jamal Murray added 21 points before leaving with 4:05 remaining in the third quarter after a collision in traffic sent him sprawling to the floor. He held his hand to his head for a couple of minutes but got up and walked under his own power to the locker room for further examination. He was back on the bench midway through the fourth but did not re-enter the game.

James Harden had 34 points to lead undermanned Houston. Christian Wood added 23.

The Rockets have started the season without key components of their roster, including John Wall, DeMarcus Cousins, Eric Gordon and Mason Jones, who remain away from the team due to COVID-19 health and safety protocols. Houston dressed nine players against the Nuggets and was coming off a two-point overtime loss at Portland in the season opener Saturday.

Jazz 110, Thunder 109

Donovan Mitchell hit a go-ahead layup with 7 seconds left and finished with 20 points, lifting Utah over Oklahoma City.

Bogan Bogdanovich scored 23 points and Mike Conley added 20 points, 10 rebounds and nine assists for the Jazz, who ended a 17-game losing streak in regular-season road games against the Thunder, including games in the NBA's Orlando bubble last season. Utah's last win in Oklahoma City came on Oct. 31, 2010.

Shai Gilgeous-Alexander, who hit a game-winning shot in the Thunder's season-opening win at Charlotte, missed a driving layup in heavy traffic at the buzzer. He had 23 points and seven assists, while Luguentz Dort led the Thunder with a career-high 26 points.

Hawks 128, Pistons 120

Trae Young scored 29 points, Bogdan Bogdanovic added 17 and Atlanta beat Detroit in its home opener.

John Collins finished with 15 points for the Hawks, who are 3-0 for the first time since 2016-17. They hit 20 3-pointers while shooting 48% from beyond the arc.

The Pistons dropped to 0-3. They played without star forward Blake Griffin and reserve guard Derrick Rose, who were given the night off to rest.

Josh Jackson scored 27 points in Griffin's spot. Jerami Grant also had 27.

Grizzlies 116, Nets 111 OT

Ja Morant exited with a sprained ankle but the Memphis Grizzlies earned their first victory of the season without him, outlasting the short-handed Brooklyn in overtime Monday night.

The reigning NBA Rookie of the Year was wheeled to the back of the arena late in the first half after hurting his left ankle when he leaped to block a shot by Timothé Luwawu-Cabarrot and landed on the Nets forward's foot. Morant rejoined his teammates on the bench in the second half with his foot in a walking boot.

He watched Brandon Clarke score the go-ahead basket on a follow shot with 41 seconds left in overtime before the Grizzlies put it away with free throws.

Kyle Anderson scored a career-high 28 points and Dillon Brooks added 24 for the Grizzlies, who had dropped their first two games. Clarke had 16 points and Jonas Valanciunas finished with 14 points and 14 rebounds.

Caris LeVert had 28 points and 11 assists for the Nets, who rested Kevin Durant and Kyrie Irving while losing for the second straight night. Brooklyn is also without Spencer Dinwiddie, who will have surgery to repair a partially torn right ACL sustained Sunday.

Padres to acquire Darvish in 7-player deal

CALIFORNIA—The San Diego Padres aren't joking around about contending in 2021.

According to reports, the Chicago Cubs are set to trade righty starter Yu Darvish to the Padres in a seven-player deal that ships starter Zach Davies and four prospects to Chicago. ESPN's Jeff Passan reported the deal is "on the verge."

The Cubs are also sending catcher Victor Caratini to San Diego in the deal. The 27-year-old has played three years with the Cubs, but notably was Darvish's personal catcher last season in Chicago.

In return, MLB.com's Mark Feinsand reported that the Cubs will add SS Reginald Preciado, OF Owen Caissie, OF Ismael Mena and SS Yeison Santana, none of whom ranked among the Top 10 prospects in San Diego's stacked system.

If the Padres' reported trade for former AL Cy Young winner Blake Snell was a blockbuster, the trade for Darvish is a stunner. They acquired Snell from the Tampa Bay Rays on Sunday night, sending four prospects to Tampa in the deal. With the ink barely dry on that trade, it seemed unlikely that the Padres would trade for another top-tier pitcher at all, let alone the very next day.

But with so many teams looking for ways to shed payroll in 2021 instead of focusing on contending, the Padres apparently decided to take advantage and go all in. Cubs owner Tom Ricketts called the losses MLB owners sustained in 2020 "biblical."

Darvish, 34, signed a six-year, $126 million contract with the Cubs before the 2018 season. He made his MLB debut with the Texas Rangers in 2012. Padres GM A.J. Preller, notably, worked in the Rangers front office in 2012 and was a key player in scouting and signing Darvish when he came to America.

He was traded to the Los Angeles Dodgers in July of 2017, and helped them make it to the World Series that year, then famously lost to the Houston Astros team that was later tarnished by the sign-stealing scandal. His Game 7 loss was scrutinized and later recast by the scandal.

Darvish had struggled with his command in recent years, especially in his first season with the Cubs, but looked fantastic during the 2020 shortened season. In 12 starts over 76 innings he had a 2.01 ERA with just 14 walks and 93 strikeouts.

Sliding in on top of the Padres rotation, he will anchor a group suddenly set to include Snell (a Cy Young winner in 2018), breakout star Dinelson Lamet (fourth in NL voting in 2020) and Chris Paddack (second in Rookie of the Year voting in 2019 before slumping in 2020). The last spot could soon be occupied by the game's top pitching prospect, MacKenzie Gore.

The Cubs' haul for Darvish will include a new starter to plug into the rotation. Zach Davies, a diminutive right-hander who pitched for the division rival Milwaukee Brewers until last year, is a changeup artist with quite a few stylistic similarities to Cubs mainstay Kyle Hendricks. He had his best year in the majors with the Padres, posting a 2.73 ERA across 12 starts and striking out a career-best 22.8 percent of the batters he faced.

Preciado, a 17-year-old shortstop prospect, ranks highest of the four prospects heading back to Chicago per MLB Pipeline.

Meanwhile, Mets owner Steve Cohen took to Twitter on Monday night in reaction to the San Diego Padres on the verge of completing their second big trade in two days.

"Hey, Give the Padres credit. They had a Top 5 farm system that gave them flexibility to trade for Snell. Newsflash, the Mets farm system needs to be replenished," Cohen said.

On Sunday, the Padres traded for Snell from the Tampa Bay Rays. And as of late Monday night, it looks like the Padres deal with Darvish is nearly official.

Cohen clearly understands that to get a big name player via trade, let alone two, you need to have a deep farm system that can afford to trade away young players.

The Mets have been in the hunt for a star player this offseason, including the possible trade option of Indians SS Francisco Lindor. ***(AP/NBC)***

Bills earn 1st sweep of Patriots since '99

FOXBOROUGH, Mass. (AP)—The Buffalo Bills put a cherry atop the changing of the guard in the AFC East.

A week after unseating the Patriots as division champions, Buffalo became the first AFC East team in two decades to sweep New England in a season series with a 38-9 victory Monday night.

Josh Allen passed for four touchdowns to help the Bills stay in the mix for the No. 2 seed in the AFC playoffs.

The Bills (12-3) last swept the Patriots in 1999. The last division opponents to sweep the Patriots were the Jets and Dolphins in 2000. The Patriots' 19 straight seasons without losing both games to a divisional opponent was an NFL record. New England (6-9) will finish with its first losing record since coach Bill Belichick's first season in 2000.

Allen was 27 of 36 for 320 yards. He now has 34 touchdown passes, surpassing Jim Kelly to set a franchise single-season record. With his eighth 300-yard game, he also surpassed Drew Bledsoe's single-season team record of seven.

"We've got one game left. And all that, it's cool, the records, this and that," Allen said. "But the plan is to get to 13-3 and give ourselves a chance in the playoffs. It doesn't mean much if we can't get it done."

Stefon Diggs had nine catches for 145 yards and three touchdowns, setting a Bills single-season record for receiving yards.

"I'm new to this team so I'm basking in (the) ambience of everybody," Diggs said. "I've got a young quarterback who's balling."

Buffalo Bills quarterback Josh Allen, left, gives a stiff arm to New England Patriots cornerback Jason McCourty in the first half of an NFL game, Monday, Dec. 28, 2020, in Foxborough, Mass.

The Patriots struggled to move the ball for most of the night with running back Damien Harris out for the second straight game with an ankle injury. Cam Newton had a touchdown run but was just 5 of 10 for 34 yards passing before being pulled in the third quarter for backup Jarrett Stidham.

Newton's 34 yards passing are the fewest by a Patriots starting quarterback since 1993.

He said the season has been frustrating because the work he has put in hasn't translated into wins.

"I've sacrificed so much this year, and it hurts when you have an outing that you have tonight," he said.

Belichick said he hasn't made any decisions about who will start the Patriots' finale Sunday against the New York Jets.

"It was the opportunity to give him a chance to play," Belichick said of inserting Stidham. "Cam did a good job for us. I mean, that wasn't the problem. We were just not very competitive in the beginning."

The Bills had no trouble moving the ball against a depleted Patriots defense that was missing linebacker Ja'Whaun Bentley and defensive tackle Lawrence Guy due to shoulder injuries.

Their absences were most glaring in the passing game. New England struggled to put pressure on Allen, allowing him time to find open receivers. The Patriots allowed a season-worst 474 yards overall.

"They outplayed us across the board, outplayed us and outcoached us," Belichick said.

The Patriots closed to 10-9 on Newton's 9-yard TD run in the second quarter, but Nick Folk missed the extra point and the Bills pulled away from there.

Buffalo used its passing game to march down the field on the ensuing drive. Allen completed 5 of 7 throws for 59 yards and a 4-yard TD to Lee Smith.

After a quick three-and-out by New England, the Bills went right back to work.

Allen misfired on his first pass of the drive, and then connected with Diggs for 17 yards to get the ball to midfield. Diggs got free again on the next play, slipping behind J.C. Jackson on a slant and sprinting the final 32 yards for the touchdown to make it 24-9.

The Allen-Diggs connection worked again on the opening drive of the second half. Allen found Diggs three times during an eight-play, 75-yard drive that ended with an 18-yard TD play by the star receiver.

Goff out in crucial game vs Cards

The Los Angeles Rams will now have to turn to backup John Wolford in order to reach the playoffs.

Rams quarterback Jared Goff underwent surgery on his right thumb on Monday after he broke it in their 20-9 loss to the Seattle Seahawks on Sunday afternoon, the team announced. Wolford will now start in his place.

The team is also planning to bring in Blake Bortles to back up Wolford.

Goff both broke and dislocated his thumb during the loss in Seattle after he smacked it off of Seahawks defensive end Benson Mayowa's helmet. Goff finished the game—he was seen popping his thumb back into place after dislocating it—and went 24 of 43 for 234 yard with an interception.

The Rams need to beat the Cardinals on Sunday to ensure that they reach the postseason. If they lose, the Rams need the Green Bay Packers to beat the Chicago Bears.

Manchester City, PSG favored to land Messi

SPAIN—Lionel Messi's future with Barcelona remains uncertain, but it came into significantly clearer focus on Sunday, when Spanish television network La Sexta aired the Argentine legend's pre-Christmas interview with journalist Jordi Evole.

The 33-year-old tried to leave the only professional club he's ever known last summer, but decided to stay for the final season of his contract rather than engage in a drawn-out and very public legal battle over a disputed escape clause.

"It was a manner of making a point and expressing my feelings. It was me telling the club that I wanted to leave," Messi told Evole. "I felt I'd completed a cycle and it was time to leave the club that had given me so much. I wanted to win titles and battle for the Champions League and felt it was time for change."

With just over six months remaining on his current pact, Messi is free to negotiate and sign a pre-contract with any club outside Spain beginning Jan. 1. Speculation about his plans has been running rampant across the globe, and Messi apparently wanted to set the record straight by revealing his plans.

English Premier League titan Manchester City and French champion Paris Saint-Germain were and are the frontrunners to land Messi if he leaves Barca. The star is still very much a fan of Guardiola, who as the Blaugrana's boss won two Champions League titles with Messi earlier in his career.

"His way of preparing for games was exceptional," Messi said of Guardiola.

As for PSG, Barcelona will meet last year's Champions League runner-up in February the round of 16 of this year's competition. Messi said he spoke to Neymar, Paris' headliner and Messi's former teammate at the Camp Nou, after the Dec. 16 draw that pitted the two clubs against each other. The Brazilian said recently that he hopes the pair can play on the same side again. But while there's been rumblings that Neymar wants to return to Barca, Messi doesn't see it happening.

Perhaps the biggest single piece of news to come out of the interview, beyond Messi confirming that he won't look for a new club in January, was the revelation that he's eyeing a turn in MLS.

"I would like to play in the United States someday and experience life and the league there ... it's always been one of my dreams," he said. "[But] I'm not thinking too far ahead; in the short term I just want to see how the season finishes."

"I'm going to wait for the season to finish," he said. "The important thing is to think about the team and to try and win titles, not to get distracted with other issues.

"I don't know what will happen," Messi insisted. "I'm focused on what we have in front of us over the next six months. It wouldn't be right to tell you what I'm going to do after that, because even I don't know ... let's wait and see what happens and I'll make my mind up in the summer."

Messi said he's happier now, and the departure of then-club president Josep Bartomeu — the man who refused to let Messi walk in August— appears to have eased some of the bitterness the game's greatest player felt last summer. Messi said Bartomeu lied to him "about many things," but declined to go into specifics. "It will come out in the future," Messi said.

Messi might be desperate to win while he still can. But Barca is in a rebuilding phase, with veterans such as Luis Suarez (Messi's close friend) and Ivan Rakitić sent packing before the season began.

"It's going to be difficult to return to where we were," Messi said. "It won't be easy for the new president to turn things around. I hope whoever wins does things well to get this great club back to where it deserves to be."

Messi was particularly critical of the decision to let Suarez move within La Liga, to rival Atletico Madrid. "I felt it was crazy the way his exit was handled," Messi said. "Barcelona let him go to a direct rival."

But his tone seemed to soften when he was asked about first-year manager Ronald Koeman. There has been lots of speculation that the two don't see eye-to-eye, but Messi defended his coach's up-and-down results so far.

"It's difficult for him as we're in transition," Messi said of Koeman. "There are new players and young talent coming through, so it's difficult." ***(NBC)***

MRA Series: Togawa back on top

JOSEPH CHIN
Keenon Togawa, right, leads riders in the Peewee Classes 1 and 2 and Mini ATV as they head out to the course at the CowTown Raceway during the fifth leg of the Marianas Racing Association Series last Sunday.

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

Seven-year-old Keenon Togawa regained his spot at the top of the podium in the Peewee Class 2 (dirt bike) after ruling the combined event during the fifth leg of the Marianas Racing Association Series last Sunday at the former CowTown Raceway in Marpi.

Togawa, who prevailed in the series opener last month, finished ahead of Jonoah Santos in last weekend's division contest and the nine other riders that raced together (Peewees 1 and 2 and Mini ATV). Togawa's victory ended the streak of Santos, who clinched first place from the second to the fourth leg.

In the Mini ATV, Therese Borja got her third win and made it two in a row after beating Melvin Reyes and Brooklyn Susulin. Borja was third overall in the combined youth race behind Togawa and Santos.

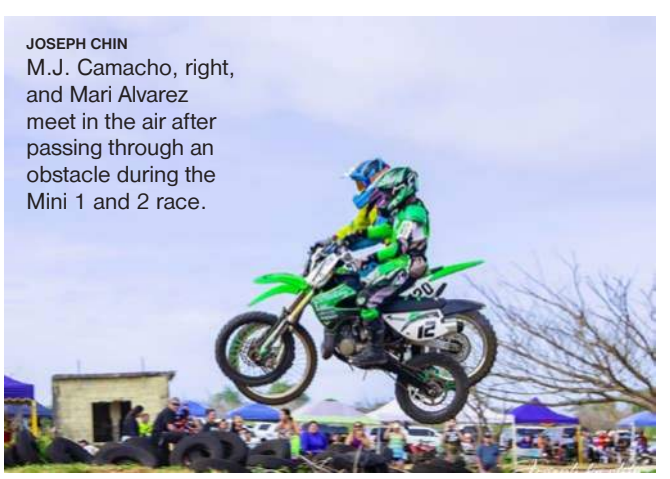
T.J. Ferrer was fourth overall, but first in the Peewee Class 1 for also his first victory in the division. He outclassed Harley Susulin, Zane Fujihira, Cassidy Villagomez, Bently Koshiro, and Baby Joe Santos.

In the Minis 1 and 2, M.J. Camacho picked up where he left off for win No. 3 out of the five legs. Camacho finished ahead of Mari Alvarez, Ethan and Devin Yumul, and Edina Cepeda.

In the Veteran Class (over 45), Melvin Cepeda reigned supreme, as he defeated Boss Alvarez, Henry Camacho, Ray Yumul, Charles Cepeda, and Chris Alepuyo. Henry Camacho was third overall in the Veterans Class, but first in the ATV, edging Alepuyo.

The Novice and Expert Open classes also had combined races, but had their respective division winners.

Cuki Alvarez was first overall and took the Expert Open Class top honors, downing son, Shane, and Angelo Hernaez. Corry Pangelinan was ranked fourth overall and first in the Novice Class, winning over Arthur Jebehn, Henry Camacho, Kier Agda, and Sus Santos. Franklin Santos finished fourth in the Expert Class and was followed by Patrick Togawa, Alepuyo, and Melvin Cepeda.



JOSEPH CHIN
M.J. Camacho, right, and Mari Alvarez meet in the air after passing through an obstacle during the Mini 1 and 2 race.

JOSEPH CHIN
Veteran Class riders make a turn along the course.

Sponsors to extend contracts for postponed Tokyo Olympics

TOKYO (AP)—The Tokyo Organizing Committee of the Olympic and Paralympic Games has reached basic agreements with all 68 domestic sponsors on additional support money needed due to the one-year postponement to next summer as a result of the coronavirus pandemic.

"We cannot be too grateful," committee head Yoshiro Mori said at a news conference in Tokyo last week. "Though there should be lots of debate in-house, I believe they will continue to support us, as they accept the huge significance" of hosting the events, the former Japanese prime minister added.

The 68 companies include some with dismal earnings prospects amid the COVID-19 crisis. But they reached agreements with the committee to show their support for the Tokyo Olympics and Paralympics on an "all-Japan" basis, analysts said.

The committee thus expects to secure more than 22 billion yen ($212 million) in additional support, including the supply of materials.

With the basic agreements reached by Thursday, the committee and sponsors are proceeding to sign new contracts that will be effective until the end of 2021.

As a result of the agreements, the sponsors will contribute more than 370 billion yen ($3.57 billion) to the committee's total revenues of 721 billion yen. These contributions are roughly three times more than the previous record, exceeding the $1.22 billion (126 billion yen at the current exchange rate) provided by sponsors of the 2008 Beijing Olympics and the $1.15 billion for the 2012 London Olympics.

Domestic sponsors for the Tokyo Games are divided into three categories, with the highest tier being the 15 gold partners. The existing contracts were due to expire at the end of this year, and around July the committee began negotiations with sponsors on extending them.

LADY

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Rollers Red last Sunday, 75-46, and then outclassed the Ol'Aces last Monday, 39-32, to notch the second and last finals berth. The first finals ticket went to Rollers Blue as it was unbeaten in the preliminary round.

Bryan Bernardo anchored Sun Palace's demolition of Rollers Red after firing 19 points, while Tenorio also scored in twin digits with his 15 markers.

Against the Ol'Aces, Kristian Itaas, who made 9 markers in their victory over Rollers Red, this time broke into double figures when he made 14 and led Sun Palace to a finals stint.

Sun Palace will challenge Rollers Blue for the division championship this Saturday with Game 1 kicking off at 2:30pm. Rollers Blue holds the twice-to-beat edge over Sun Palace in the finals.

Women's Division

Lady Ol'Aces 36—C. Camacho 10, Rangamar 7, D. Camacho 6, Pangelinan 6, Deleon Guerrero 5, Labausa 2.

Baby Ol'Aces 25—Camacho 12, Fernandez 8, Joyce 5.

Scoring by halves: 21-13, 36-25.

Boys U19 Sunday

Sun Palace 75—Bernardo 19, Tenorio 15, Hudkins 9, Itaas 9, Kim 8, Ferrari 8, Elchico 7.

Rollers Red 46—Christopher 18, V. Satur 14, Palmes 12, Pangelinan 2.

Scoring by halves: 31-17, 75-46.

Boys U19 Monday

Sun Palace 39—Itaas 14, T. Kim 8, Elchico 7, Tenorio 4, Contreras 4, Matalog 2.

Ol'Aces 32—Hapdei 11, Kapwich 10, Laniyo 4, Sacdalan 3, Basa 2, Jonny 2.

Scoring by halves: 20-18, 39-32.

CNMI

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Pacific Mini Games, according to the local federation's president John Davis.

Initially, only six sports have been approved on the calendar of events for the Mini Games, which Saipan will be hosting from June 17 to 25. Athletics, badminton, beach volleyball, golf, triathlon, baseball were on the short list, as proposed by host NMI (through the Northern Marianas Sports Association) and concurred by the Pacific Games Council and Pacific Games Association members last year.

However, early this month during the NMSA General Membership Meeting, the host island announced that it had officially requested for the inclusion of tennis and weightlifting in the Mini Games program. The request will be subject for votes/approval when the PGC and PGA convene early next year. ***(Saipan Tribune)***

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
The Oceania Weightlifting Federation donated weight belts, straps, and shoes to the CNMI Weightlifting.

Lillard, Trent lift Blazers past Lakers

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Lady Ol'Aces force rubber

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

The Lady Ol'Aces kept their title hopes alive after beating the Baby Ol'Aces, 36-25, in Game 1 of their title duel in the women's division of the Rollers 2020 Holiday Tournament last Saturday at the Koblerville Gymnasium.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
The Lady Ol'Aces' Lia Rangamar, center, pulls up for a shot against two Baby Ol'Aces defenders during the second half in Game 1 of the women's division finals in the Rollers 2020 Holiday Tournament last Saturday at the Koblerville Gymnasium.

The Lady Ol'Aces spread the wealth to force a rubber against the Baby Ol'Aces, who earned a twice-to-beat advantage in the finals after having an undefeated record in the preliminary round. The deciding Game 2 will be played this Saturday at 4pm.

Cassanda Camacho led the Lady Ol'Aces' balanced scoring after firing 10 points. Four other Lady Ol'Aces players contributed at least two baskets apiece with Lia Rangamar adding 7 markers, Desrei Camacho and Jaime Pangelinan chipping in 6 apiece, and Tas Deleon Guerrero logging 5 points. Antonette Labausa rounded out the Lady Ol'Aces' box score after making a basket.

As for the Baby Ol'Aces, only three players hit the board for the squad with Sed Camacho recording 12 points and Alliyah Fernandez and Paulyn Joyce tallying 7 and 5, respectively.

Cassandra Camacho dropped 8 of her total output in the first half to hand the Lady Ol'Aces a 21-13 halftime advantage. The rest of Cassandra's teammates picked up where she left off in the second half for their double-digit margin and to keep the Lady Ol'Aces in the hunt for the division crown.

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Sun Palace vs Rollers Blue

In the boys U19 division, Sun Palace won its last two matches to set a finals showdown against Rollers Blue.

Sun Palace first whipped

ROSELYN B. MONROYO
Rollers Blue's Charlie McDonald, left, drives against the Ol'Aces' Lucio Aldan during their U17 title match last Sunday. Rollers Blue won, 37-24, while its boys U19 team will be gunning for the division crown against Sun Palace this Saturday.

CNMI Weightlifting gets needed boost

Though CNMI Weightlifting still does not have a base of operations, it continues to make baby steps toward the development of the sport.

Thanks to the International Weightlifting Federation and the Oceania Weightlifting Federation.

Over the past year, the CNMI Weightlifting has received approximately 585 kg (1,287 lbs) of training barbells, courtesy of the IWF. The OWF, on the other hand, has provided several online training seminars to the local federation, covering coaching, technical officials, and medical issues. The OWF also donated weight belts, straps, and shoes to the CNMI Weightlifting.

In addition, OWG has provided several opportunities for NMI athletes to compete virtually. The Commonwealth's weightlifters participated in the Pacific Islands Email Tournament, Oceania International League E-Mail Weightlifting Tournament, and the 2020 Oceania Cup Online Tournament.

With these competitions and trainings plus assistance in securing equipment, the CNMI Weightlifting is hopeful that the sport will be included in the program for the 2022

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CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
A CNMI lifter trains during a session at a private facility.